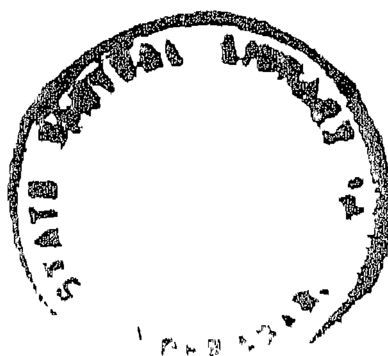


IN 1918

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

XIV

(October 1917-July 1918)





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PREFACE

The ten months, October 1917 to July 1918, covered by this volume are a period of intense and almost continuous activity, and show how Gandhiji applies the principle of satyagraha to meet situations which seem to have little in common among them. His relatively easy success in Champaran had awakened interest in his method, but the power and force of satyagraha had to be tested more severely and demonstrated more convincingly before Gandhiji could think of applying it to national problems. Two such experiments were conducted during the Ahmedabad mill-hands' strike of February-March and the Kheda satyagraha of March-April 1918. Gandhiji's part in the war effort illustrates the other side of satyagraha, which means not only resistance to injustice but goodwill for the enemy and readiness to co-operate with him when the occasion demands. The period was thus a crucial time when the lessons of satyagraha were learnt and taught and the ground was prepared for Gandhiji's assumption of national leadership.

The Ahmedabad mill-hands' strike was a unique episode in some ways. Labour organization was yet new to the country and the theory of class struggle which inspired the movement in Europe was practically unknown. Gandhiji had seen in South Africa and heartily disliked a labour agitation inspired by hostility to employers and the Government, and the experience had only strengthened his faith in the power of non-violence to solve all problems of human relationship. The Ahmedabad struggle offered him an opportunity to test and prove this faith and was inspired by an active desire to harmonize the interests of the employers and the workers and handle occasions of friction in a manner which would not generate bitterness. The mill-hands in Ahmedabad demanded a commensurate wage increase to make up for the special war-time allowance arbitrarily withdrawn by the mill-owners. Gandhiji was not anxious to precipitate an agitation. Appealing to the employers to bind the workers with the "silken thread of love" (p. 115), he succeeded, on February 14, in getting an arbitrator appointed to look into the problem. On the other side, he roused the workers to a sense of their rights, but took care to pledge them, at the same time, to the avoidance, of violence in any form. When an open struggle became inevitable Gandhiji threw his weight on the side of the workers and took

over active leadership. He issued daily bulletins intended to educate both the workers and the employers, exhorting the former to conduct their struggle in the spirit of satyagraha and calling for a change of heart in the latter. He recalled the struggle of Indians in South Africa and the martyrdom of Valliamah and Hurbatsingh. He reminded the workers of their own shortcomings and taught them to look upon the struggle for increase in wages as part of a larger effort to improve their way of life. When he noticed signs of their weakening in the face of hardships, he undertook an indefinite fast to demonstrate his readiness to die for their cause. Though he made it clear to everyone concerned that the fast was not intended to put pressure on the mill-owners, he admitted that it could not but have such an effect and, therefore, when the latter yielded, Gandhiji refused to take full advantage of the situation and press for a complete acceptance of the workers' demands. His stand possibly antagonized a section of the workers for a while, but he succeeded in pacifying them. The conclusion of the struggle thus embodied the spirit of compromise which was always an integral element in Gandhiji's conception of satyagraha.

Almost before he was out of the mill-hands' strike, Gandhiji was faced with the possibility of his first serious conflict with the authorities. Crops had sustained serious damage owing to floods in Kheda district in Gujarat and the local public workers felt that the situation warranted whole or partial remission of revenue under the Revenue Code. But the Government was unresponsive to popular feeling in the matter. Gandhiji's advice was sought while he was still in Champaran. On his return from there, he actively interested himself in the people's grievance. After a first-hand study of the crop situation, he came to the conclusion that the popular demand for remission was justified. However, representations to the authorities made no change in their unsympathetic attitude. Gandhiji then advised active resistance on the part of the people. "It seems self-evident to me that there is nothing unlawful if, to express one's sense of injustice, one refuses to pay a tax, in a perfectly civil manner, and lets it be collected [forcibly]" (p. 217). On March 22, addressing a meeting at Nadiad, he invited the people to take a pledge to refuse payment of revenue, making the local grievance a matter of wider principle. He observed, " . . . in this country, it has become a practice with the Government to insist that it is always in the right. It is intolerable that, however just the people's case, the Government should have its own way. Justice must prevail and injustice yield" (p. 277). In almost every speech he made during the struggle,

he drew attention to this wider significance and sought to educate the people in the democratic spirit which should inform the Government's dealings with them. He wanted the people to cultivate a sense of sacrifice. "All nations which have risen have done so through suffering" (p. 277). Again, "Authority is blind and unjust. A Government that says that such authority must be respected cannot last" (p. 323). "No King," he told them further, "can remain in power if he sets himself against the people. I have taken it as the chief mission of my life to prove this" (pp. 328-9). Referring to the Commissioner's address at a meeting on April 12, which he had advised the people to attend, he felt compelled to say that it was "the sacred duty of every loyal citizen to fight unto death against such a spirit of vindictiveness and tyranny" (p. 340).

On April 25, the authorities showed evidence of a change of policy, if not of heart. Orders were issued that, if those who were in a position to do so paid up the arrears, those who were not would be exempted. When the orders were publicized early in June, Gandhiji accepted them, though he felt and declared that the concession lacked grace. The gains by way of actual relief were insubstantial, but the people had acquired a spirit of fearlessness and a consciousness of their strength to employ satyagraha whenever necessary. This, to Gandhiji's mind, was sufficient reward for the suffering which the struggle had entailed.

The end of the Kheda struggle must have come to Gandhiji as a relief since it left him free to give his attention to the larger question of war effort as a national issue and demonstrate his readiness, as a satyagrahi, to help the Government. Believing still in the usefulness of the British connection to India and allowing his chivalrous instinct to prevail for the moment over a purely logical interpretation of his doctrine of non-violence, Gandhiji offered his services to the Empire. Politically, he hoped, co-operation in the war effort would have its effect on the better side of the British character and, in any case, generate sufficient strength in the country to make it impossible for the British Government to ignore the national aspiration for Home Rule. Overcoming his initial hesitation, he attended the Viceroy's War Conference in Delhi on April 28 and made up his mind to work actively for the war effort. On May 25, he publicly advocated enlistment in the army. Tilak and other leaders had reservations as to the wisdom of unconditional co-operation. The situation must have been more than embarrassing to Gandhiji when, at the Provincial War Conference in Bombay on June 10, Lord Willingdon, the

Governor, stopped Tilak and Kelkar from proceeding with their speeches. Gandhiji took up the matter with the Governor and told him in so many words that his action was a serious blunder. He led in the public disapproval of the Governor's tactless behaviour and demanded an apology for what he considered an affront to the nation. Nevertheless, he called for co-operation in the war effort and went to the length of undertaking a strenuous recruiting campaign in Kheda district, with unhappy consequences for his health. The apparent inconsistency of the apostle of non-violence recruiting for the army invited comment even from friends and he had to explain, what he repeated time and again afterwards, that non-violence cannot be invoked to shield cowardice, that he himself would refrain from violence in all conceivable circumstances, but would advise others, who did not share his belief in the supremacy of non-violence, not to shrink from violence out of fear or weakness. If the Indian people, he argued, wanted the benefits of the British connection, they must help to defend the Empire. However, he put his faith exclusively in satyagraha for realizing the country's political aspirations. "It is our supreme duty", he wrote to a public worker, "to take every occasion to show in action the wonderful power of satyagraha" (p. 141). Again, in his speech at Indore, on March 30, he declared: "If we can ensure the deliverance of India, it is only through truth and non-violence" (p. 299). Gandhiji felt, all the same, the complexities of the moral issues involved in pursuing the non-violent way in human affairs. "One cannot climb the Himalayas in a straight line. Can it be that, in like fashion, the path of non-violence, too, is difficult?" (p. 516).

Small matters claimed the same earnest attention from Gandhiji as did big national issues. He tried to put the contentious question of cow-protection in better perspective by relating it to a compassionate concern for the welfare of the animal world. His constructive approach to the problem is revealed in his emphasis on improved breeding, humane treatment of bullocks, setting up of model dairies and so on. Another problem which had come to engage more and more of his attention was that of education. He was unhappy for several reasons with the educational system established by the British, but his main objection was to the unnatural importance given to English by its being made the medium of instruction. He spoke and wrote on the abolition of the practice of untouchability and acceptance of caste restrictions only in the measure that they promoted self-control.

In all his multifarious activities, Gandhiji was sustained by a burning love for India. "Only if I die for India shall I know that I was fit to live" (p. 43). He was impatient to deliver his message to the country while his influence was in the ascendent. But he was aware of his limited experience of Indian conditions and felt his way in politics rather cautiously. Presiding over the Gujarat Political Conference on November 3, 1917, he described himself as "a baby of two years and a half in Indian politics. I cannot trade here on my experience in South Africa" (p. 48). Yet he had to be in political life. Asked by Montagu the reason for this, he had replied that otherwise he could not do his religious and social work, adding later : "I think the reply will stand good to the end of my life" (p. 478). The abysmal poverty of the country weighed on his mind day and night, all the more so since the people seemed helpless to do anything about it. Political freedom was essential for progress in all other spheres too and he wanted the country to have the right to err. "He who has no right to err can never go forward . . . The freedom to err and the power to correct errors is one definition of swaraj" (p. 54). He subordinated all other public concerns to the one central aim of securing swaraj for the country, and welcomed the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms as a step towards it.

A notable feature of this volume is the large number of letters covering over one third of it. Addressed to close relatives, co-workers and associates in India and in South Africa, to friends, public workers, academicians, editors, officials at all levels and politicians of all schools, the letters reveal Gandhiji's political and other concerns blending with his human interest in the correspondents. As his circle of personal and political contacts widens and public work becomes ever more strenuous, his concern for individual men and women seems, if anything, to grow deeper and more active.

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages where these are in English have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and passages which are not by Gandhiji have been given in small type.

While translating from the Gujarati, Marathi or Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations of these are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item where available or could be inferred has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, with reasons where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside of the source is that of publication.

References in footnotes to Volume I of this series are to the August 1958 edition. References to *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* cite only the Part and Chapter in view of the varying pagination in different editions.

In the source-line, the symbol S. N. stands for documents available in Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G. N. refers to those available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C. W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi; and N. A. I. refers to the National Archives of India.

The Appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the Volume are also provided at the end.

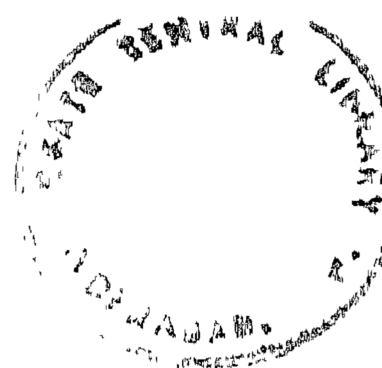
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For research and reference facilities, we owe thanks to the All-India Congress Committee Library, the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, the Indian Council of World Affairs Library, the Research and Reference Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi; the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya and the Gujarat Vidyapith Granthalaya, Ahmedabad.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS



1. LETTER TO KOTWAL

MOTIHARI,
Aso Vad 9 [October 9, 1917][1]

BHAISHRI KOTWAL[2],

I have your letter. I hope you got my telegram[3]. I wanted to write immediately but could not. And then I was on the move all the time and so could not write.

You have had to suffer much. If you see matters in the right light, you will be the better for the suffering. You lost your daughter, then your mother; now, India is all you have, call her daughter or mother, what you will. You can get much from her and give her much. You will receive a hundred times more than you give. She is a *Kamadhuk*[4], but how can she yield milk if we don't so much as feed her with hay? What you may give and how, we shall consider when you are here.

If you agree to come over here, I am here up to the 20th at any rate. After that, there will be some moving about.

I have one speech[5] of mine with me, which I am sending. Others I shall send when I receive copies.

Accompanying me are Ba[6], Devdas[7] and Avantikabehn, as also her husband Baban Gokhale, and some others.

Vandemataram[8] *from*
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 3613

[1] After completion of the inquiry into conditions of the indigo labour in Champaran, Gandhiji returned to Motihari from Ranchi on the night of October 8, 1917.

[2] An associate of Gandhiji at Tolstoy Farm, in South Africa

[3] This is not available.

[4] Sacred cow which, according to fable, yielded all that one desired.

[5] This is not available.

[6] Kasturba (1869-1944); Gandhiji's wife

[7] Devdas Gandhi (1900-57); youngest of Gandhiji's sons; was associated with Gandhiji in most of his public activities and suffered imprisonment; Editor, *The Hindustan Times*, 1940-57

[8] "Salutations to the motherland!" This had become a national slogan ever since Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's poem beginning with this phrase, in *Anandmath*, was adopted as a national song by the Indian National Congress.

2. SPEECH ON COW PROTECTION, BETTIAH[1]

[About *October 9, 1917*][2]

I am thankful to the Gaurakshini Sabha and to you all for inviting me to lay the foundation-stone of the *gaushala*[3] in this town. For the Hindus, this is sacred work. Protection of the cow is a primary duty for every Indian. It has been my experience, however, that the way we set about this important work leaves much to be desired. I have given some thought to this serious problem and wish to place before you the conclusions I have formed.

These days cow protection has come to mean only two things: first, to save cows from the hands of our Muslim brethren on occasions like the *Bakr-i-Id*[4] and, secondly, to put up *gaushalas* for decrepit cows.

We do not go the right way to work for protecting the cows against our Muslim brethren. The result has been that these two great communities of India are always at odds with each other and cherish mutual distrust. Occasionally, they even fight. The riot at Shahabad a few days ago bears out my statement. The problem calls for some serious thinking on the part of both the communities. Hundreds of Hindu friends indulged in rioting and looted the property of innocent Muslims. What virtue could there be in this? In fact, it was a very sinful thing to do.

The activities of the Gaurakshini Sabha result in a far larger number of cows being killed than are saved. Hinduism attaches special importance to non-violence. It is the very opposite of religious conduct to kill a Muslim in order to save a cow. If we wish the Muslims not to kill cows, we should bring about a change of heart in them. We shall not succeed by force. We should reach their hearts with prayer and entreaty and achieve our purpose by awakening their sense of compassion. In adopting this course, we should take a pledge that, while seeking to protect the cows, we

[1] The meeting was held under the auspices of the Gaurakshini Sabha at Bettiah, a small town in the Champaran district of Bihar, about 25 miles from Motihari.

[2] The date is inferred from the reference, in the speech, to the communal riots in Shahabad, Bihar, which occurred between September 28 and October 9.

[3] Institution for care of infirm and disabled cows

[4] A Muslim festival

shall bear no ill-will or malice towards Muslims or be angry with them or fight with them. It is when we have taken up such a reassuring attitude that we shall be qualified to raise the matter with them. It should be remembered that what we regard as sin is not seen in the same light by our Muslim brethren. On the contrary, for them it is a meritorious act to kill cows on certain occasions. Every person should follow his own religion. If it were true that killing of cows was enjoined by Islam, India would have had no genuine peace any time; as I understand the matter, however, killing of cows on occasions like *Bakr-i-Id* is not obligatory, but Muslim friends imagine it their duty to do so when we seek to prevent them by force. Be this as it may, I have no doubt in my mind that this problem can be solved only by *tapascharya*[1]. The height of *tapascharya* on such occasions is to lay down one's life for the sake of cows.

However, all Hindus are not qualified for such supreme *tapascharya*. Those who want to stop others from sinning must be free from sin themselves. Hindu society has been inflicting terrible cruelty on the cow and her progeny. The present condition of our cows is a direct proof of this. My heart bleeds when I see thousands of bullocks with no blood and flesh on them, their bones plainly visible beneath their skin, ill-nourished and made to carry excessive burdens, while the driver twists their tails and goads them on. I shudder when I see all this and ask myself how we can say anything to our Muslim friends so long as we do not refrain from such terrible violence. We are so intensely selfish that we feel no shame in milking the cow to the last drop. If you go to dairies in Calcutta, you will find that the calves there are forced to go without the mother's milk and that all the milk is extracted with the help of a process known as blowing. The proprietors and managers of these dairies are none other than Hindus and most of those who consume the milk are also Hindus. So long as such dairies flourish and we consume the milk supplied by them, what right have we to argue with our Muslim brethren? It should be borne in mind, besides, that there are slaughter-houses in all the big cities of India. Thousands of cows and bullocks are slaughtered in these. It is mostly from them that beef is supplied to the British. Hindu society keeps silent about this slaughter, thinking that it is helpless in the matter.

[1] Originally, constant meditation, such as by ancient sages, on the Supreme in search of enlightenment; here, persistent and painstaking endeavour

As long as we do not get this terrible slaughter stopped, I think it is impossible that we can produce any effect on the hearts of Muslims or protect the cows against them. Our second task, therefore, is to carry on agitation among our British friends. We are in no position to use brute strength against them. They also should be won over by *tapascharya* and gentleness. For them eating of beef is no religious act. It should be easier to that extent to persuade them. It is only after we have rid ourselves of the taint of violence which I mentioned earlier and have succeeded in persuading our British friends not to eat beef and kill cows and bullocks, it is only then that we shall be entitled to say something to our Muslim friends. I can assure you that, when we have won over the British, our Muslim brethren will also have more sympathy for us and perform their religious rites with some other kind of offering. Once we admit that we are also guilty of violence, the working of our *gaushalas* will change. We shall not reserve them merely for decrepit cows but maintain there well-nourished cows and bullocks as well. We shall endeavour to improve the breed of cattle and will also be able to produce pure milk, ghee, etc. This is not merely a religious issue. It is an issue on which hinges the economic progress of India. Economists have furnished irrefutable figures to prove that the quality of cattle in India is so poor that the income from their milk is much less than the cost of their maintenance. We can turn our *gaushalas* into centres for the study of economics and for the solution of this big problem. *Gaushalas* cost a great deal and at present we have to provide the expenses. The *gaushalas* of my conception will become self-supporting in future. They will not be located in the midst of cities. We may buy land in the neighbourhood of a city to the tune of hundreds of acres and locate these *gaushalas* there. We can raise on this land crops to serve as fodder for the cows and every variety of grass. We shall find good use for the valuable manure they yield by way of excrement and urine. I hope you will all give the utmost thought to what I have said. The Gaurakshini Sabha in Motihari has accepted this suggestion. It is my request, in the end, that both these institutions come together and undertake this big task.

[From Gujarati]

Goseva

3. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
CHAMPARAN,
October 10, 1917

CHI. CHHAGANLAL[1],

I have your letter. I take it that you will come to Broach. West[2] keeps on shouting for books. It will be good if you send him a dictionary and other suitable books from time to time. Also, send Doctor's[3] Gujarati book for sale there. Let him keep the proceeds. I have received copies here.

How is it that Prabhudas[4] does not recover?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original postcard in Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5644. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

4. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Tuesday [October 16, 1917]

CHI. MAGANLAL[5],

It is not surprising that the sight of funeral pyres made you momentarily nervous. If men had some rule and discipline in their lives, death would come at the right time and funeral pyres would take their natural course. We are upset when a storm brings down unripe fruit. We are content to see ripe fruit fall. The same is

[1] Gandhiji's nephew and co-worker; assisted Gandhiji on the Gujarati section of *Indian Opinion* in South Africa

[2] Albert Henry West, whom Gandhiji first met at a vegetarian restaurant in Johannesburg. He worked with Gandhiji and was the printer of *Indian Opinion* at the Phœnix Settlement, of which his wife, mother and sister also became inmates. Later he joined the passive resistance movement and suffered imprisonment.

[3] Dr. Pranjivan Jagjivan Mehta, a friend of Gandhiji since his student days in London; financed many of Gandhiji's schemes

[4] Prabhudas Gandhi, son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

[5] Chhaganlal Gandhi's brother and a close associate of Gandhiji

the case with human lives. When people die in consequence of calamities such as the plague, we take the thing to heart. It is *satyayuga*[1] when such things don't happen. It is for us to bring about the times when there will be no reason to fear death. If we do our best, *satyayuga* will have dawned for us. We should always be prepared for death and live without fear. To teach one to live such a life—that is the aim of the Ashram[2]. You are all doing something great indeed. It is an excellent thing to live in tents and put up with hardships. If we had stayed on in the bungalow, we would have had to hang our heads in shame. Living in tents, you are all getting beaten into shape. You are being educated. You are setting an example. You are learning to fight it out with Nature. Anyone who resolves to live such a life can do so.

I am in good cheer. I shall be able to go to the Ashram only after I have finished with Broach.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5718. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

5. *SPEECH AT RECEPTION BY MERCHANTS, BROACH*[3]

[After *October 19, 1917*]

Merchants always have the spirit of adventure, intellect and wealth, as without these qualities their business cannot go on. But, now, they must have the fervour of patriotism in them. Patriotism is necessary even for religion. If the spirit of patriotism is awakened through religious fervour, then, that patriotism will shine out brilliantly. So it is necessary that patriotism should be roused in the mercantile community.

The merchants take more part in public affairs now-a-days than before. When merchants take to politics through patriotism, swaraj is as good as obtained. Some of you might be wondering how we can get swaraj. I lay my hand on my heart and say that, when the merchant class understands the spirit of patriotism, then

[1] Age of truth, the "Golden Age"

[2] Satyagraha Ashram, founded by Gandhiji in June 1917, on the banks of the river Sabarmati near Ahmedabad

[3] Gandhiji was presented with an address of welcome by the merchants during his visit to Broach. Presumably, the speech was made in Gujarati.

only can we get swaraj quickly. Swaraj then will be quite a natural thing.

Amongst the various keys which will unlock swaraj to us, the swadeshi[1] vow is the golden one. It is in the hands of the merchants to compel the observance of the swadeshi vow in the country, and this is an adventure which can be popularized by the merchants. I humbly request you to undertake this adventure and then you will see what wonders you can do.

This being so, I have to say with regret that it is the merchant class which has brought ruin to the swadeshi practice and the swadeshi movement in this country. Complaints have lately risen in Bengal about the increase of rates, and one of them is against Gujarat. It is complained there that the prices of dhotis have been abnormally increased and dhotis go from Gujarat. No one wants you not to earn money, but it must be earned righteously and not be ill-gotten. Merchants must earn money by fair means. Unfair means must never be used.

India's strength lies with the merchant class. So much does not lie even with the army. Trade is the cause of war, and the merchant class has the key of war in their hands. Merchants raise the money and the army is raised on the strength of it. The power of England and Germany rests on their trading class. A country's prosperity depends upon its mercantile community. I consider it as a sign of good luck that I should receive an address from the merchant class. Whenever I remember Broach, I will enquire if the merchants who have given me an address this day have righteous faith and patriotism. If I receive a disappointing reply, I will think that merely a wave of giving addresses had come over India and that I had a share in it.

Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi

6. SPEECH AT SECOND GUJARAT EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

BROACH,
October 20, 1917

Gandhiji prefaced the speech with an apology to the audience:

As it is already late, reading my speech will proceed beyond the time-limit fixed for it. I read it because I am under pressure from friends here to do so. When preparing the speech, I took the utmost care to see that it briefly expressed all that I wished to say, but it has become longer than I expected. I hope to be excused, therefore, if in reading it I exceed my time.

Gandhiji then read the speech from a printed text.[1]

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

You have done me a great honour in selecting me to be the President of this Conference. I know that I do not have the necessary learning for this office. I know, too, that my work in other spheres in the service of our country does not, and cannot, qualify me for the honour you have conferred on me today. I have but one qualification for it, that I would not, I am perfectly sure, be content with anything but the first place in a contest for demonstrating one's love for Gujarati. Indeed, it is because I am confident of this that I have accepted this onerous responsibility. I hope that the generosity which has prompted you to give me this honour will also prompt you to forgive all my shortcomings, and help me in this work—which is as much yours as mine.

This Conference is but a year old. Just as, in the case of a great man, we often find indications of his future greatness even in his infancy, so it is with this Conference. I have read the report of its work for the last year. It is a report which would do credit to any institution. The Secretaries are to be congratulated on having prepared and published this valuable report in time. It is our good fortune that we have such able secretaries. To those who have not yet read this report, I suggest that they do so and ponder over it.

[1] The translation which follows is reproduced from *True Education*, with some changes intended to bring it into closer conformity with the Gujarati original.

The death of Shri Ranjitram Vavabhai[1] last year has been a great loss to us. It is a matter of deep regret that a man of letters like him was snatched away from our midst in the prime of life; this should make us pause and think. May God grant peace to the departed soul. I would request the members of his family to take strength in the thought that we all share their grief.

The organization[2] which has called this Conference has set three aims before itself:

1. To create and give expression to public opinion on questions of education.
2. To carry on propaganda in regard to educational questions in Gujarat.
3. To undertake concrete activities for promoting education in Gujarat.

I shall endeavour to place before you the results of my thinking, such as it has been, on these three aims.

It should be obvious to everyone that the first thing to do in this connection is to come to a definite decision about the medium of instruction. Unless that is done, all other efforts, I fear, are likely to prove fruitless. To impart education without first considering the question of the medium of instruction will be like raising a building without a foundation.

On this point, two views prevail among educationists. Some hold that education should be imparted through the mother tongue; that is, through Gujarati. Others contend that it should be imparted through English. Both parties are honest in their views, for both have the welfare of the country at heart. But mere good intentions are not enough to gain the end we desire. It is the experience of the world that good intentions do occasionally take us to unworthy places. We must, therefore, critically examine both these views and, if possible, come to a unanimous decision on this great and important question. There is no doubt whatsoever that the issue is of the utmost importance and we cannot consider it too carefully.

This question concerns the whole of India. But each Presidency or Province may decide this matter for itself. It is erroneous to think that, until unanimity has been reached about it, Gujarat cannot go ahead by itself.

[1] Ranjitram Vavabhai Mehta (1882-1916); in appreciation of his active literary interests, a gold medal has been instituted in Gujarat and awarded annually for outstanding achievements in the field of letters or the arts.

[2] Broach Kelavani Mandal

We can, however, solve some of our difficulties by considering what they have done about it in other Provinces. At the time of the Bengal partition[1], when the spirit of swadeshi was at its height, an effort was made there to impart education through Bengali. A national school[2] was also started. Money poured forth in plenty. But the experiment failed. In my humble opinion, the sponsors of the movement had no faith in their experiment. The teachers were in the same pitiable condition. In Bengal, the educated classes are blindly in love with English. It has been suggested that the progress made by Bengali literature in recent times is mainly due to the profound knowledge of English language and literature among the Bengalis. But the facts are against this assumption. The bewitching style of our beloved poet—Rabindranath Tagore[3] —does not owe its excellence to his knowledge of English. Its source lies rather in his love for his own language. *Gitanjali* was originally written in Bengali. This great poet always uses his mother tongue when in Bengal. The great speech he recently made at Calcutta on present-day conditions in India was in Bengali. Among those who went to hear him were some of the most prominent men and women from his part of the country. And I have been told by those who heard him on the occasion that he kept the audience literally spell-bound for an hour-and-a-half with the flow of nectar-like stream of words. He has not borrowed his ideas from English literature. He says, he has acquired them from the atmosphere of this country. He has culled them from the *Upanishads*[4]. It is our glorious Indian sky which has inspired him. I believe it is the same with other Bengali authors.

When Mahatma Munshiram[5], serene and sublime like the Himalayas, speaks in Hindi, men, women and children alike enjoy listening to him and follow him. He has reserved his English for

[1] In 1905, on grounds of administrative convenience, Bengal was divided into two provinces, one of which was predominantly Hindu and the other, Muslim. The partition, which raised a storm of protest throughout India and led to the movement for boycott of British goods, was finally annulled in 1911.

[2] A council and a society for promotion of national education were set up.

[3] 1861-1941; was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1913, for *Gitanjali*; founder of Santiniketan and Vishwabharati University

[4] Concluding portions of the *Veda*, the *Vedanta*; though they do not represent any system, they expound a discernible unity of thought and purpose and bring out a vivid sense of spiritual reality.

[5] Better known as Swami Shraddhanand, founder of the Gurukul at Kangri, near Hardwar, a residential school for imparting education in the traditional Indian style through close communion with a guru

his English friends. He does not make his [Hindi] speeches with English phrases in his mind.

It is said that the English of the revered Madan Mohan Malaviya[1], who, though a householder, has dedicated his all to the country, shines like silver. Even the Viceroy has to take note of anything that Malaviyaji says. But, if his English is like shining silver, his Hindi, the flow of the Ganga that it is, shines like gold even as the latter does when flowing down from Manasarovar.

These three great speakers have acquired this power of eloquence not from their knowledge of English but from the love of their own language. Swami Dayanand[2] did great service to Hindi not because he knew English but because he loved the Hindi language. English had nothing to do with Tukaram[3] and Ramadas[4] shedding lustre on Marathi. Premananda[5] and Shamal Bhatt[6] and, recently, Dalpatram[7], have greatly enriched Gujarati literature; their glorious success is not to be attributed to their knowledge of English.

The above examples prove beyond doubt that, for the enrichment of the mother tongue, what is needed is not knowledge of English but love for one's own language and faith in it.

We shall arrive at the same conclusion by examining the growth and development of various languages. A language mirrors the character of the people who use it. We acquire information about the manners and customs of the Negroes of South Africa by studying their native tongue. A language takes its form from the character and life of those who speak it. We can say without hesitation that the people whose language does not reflect the qualities of courage, truthfulness and compassion are deficient in those virtues. Importing of words expressive of courage or compassion from other tongues will not enrich or widen the content of a language nor make its speakers brave and kind. Courage is not to be

[1] 1861-1946; edited *Hindustan*, 1887-9, *Indian Union*, 1889-92, *Abhyudaya*, 1907-9; President, Indian National Congress, 1909 and 1918; founded the Benares Hindu University in 1916, and was its Vice-Chancellor during 1919-40; member, Imperial Legislative Council, 1910-20; attended the Round Table Conference in London, 1931-2

[2] Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83); founder of the Arya Samaj

[3] & [4] Saint-poets of Maharashtra

[5] 1636-1724; Gujarati poet; his narrative poems represent the highest achievement in Gujarati literature during the pre-British period.

[6] 1700-65; Gujarati poet; a stanza from one of his poems became Gandhiji's "guiding principle"; *vide An Autobiography*, Part I, Ch. X.

[7] Dalpatram Dahyabhai Travadi (1820-1892)

had as a gift; if it is there within, covered with rust though it be, it will shine forth when that covering disappears. In our own mother tongue, we find a large number of words denoting an excess of meekness, because we have lived under subjection for many years. Similarly, no other language in the world has as many nautical terms as English. Supposing that an enterprising Gujarati writer were to render books on the subject from English into Gujarati, it would not add one whit to the range and power of our language, nor would it in any way increase our knowledge of ships. But as soon as we start building ships and raise a navy, the necessary technical phraseology will automatically establish itself. The late Rev. Taylor has expressed this same view in his book on Gujarati grammar. He says:

> One frequently hears people arguing whether the Gujarati language is perfect or imperfect. There is a proverb saying: "As the king, so the people", and another "As the teacher, so the disciple". In the same way, we might say, "As the speaker, so the language". It does not appear that poets like Shamal Bhatt and others ever felt handicapped in expressing the innumerable thoughts in their minds because of any sense of deficiency in Gujarati. Indeed, they displayed such fine discrimination in the disposing of new and old words that whatever they said or wrote passed into currency and was incorporated in the speech of the people.
>
> In some respects, all the languages of the world are imperfect. When speaking of things beyond man's limited intellect, of God and Eternity, we shall find every language imperfect. Language is but a function of man's intellect. Hence, when the intellect fails to reach out to or fully comprehend a subject, the language [expressing the thought] will be imperfect. The general principle concerning a language is that the ideas which find expression in it reflect the minds of the people who speak it. If the people are courteous, so is their language; if the people are foolish, the language is equally so. An English proverb says: "A bad carpenter quarrels with his tools." Those who complain of the imperfection of their language often do much the same. A student with a smattering of the English language and English learning may feel tempted to think that Gujarati is imperfect, for an accurate translation from English into one's own mother tongue is difficult. The fault does not lie with the language but with the people who use it. Inasmuch as the people do not practise exercising their judgment to follow new expressions, new subjects and new styles, the writer hesitates to use them. Who will be foolhardy enough to sing in front of a deaf man? As long as the people are not ready to discriminate between good and bad, or new and old and evaluate things aright, how can we expect a writer's genius to blossom forth?

Some of those who translate from English seem to labour under the impression that they have imbibed Gujarati with their mother's milk and learnt English through study and are, therefore, perfect bilinguists. Why, they ask, should they study Gujarati? But surely acquisition of proficiency in one's own language is more important than the effort spent over mastering a foreign one. Look up the works of poets like Shamal and others. Every verse bears evidence of study and labour. Gujarati may seem imperfect before one has struggled with it, but afterwards one will find it mature enough. He whose effort is half-hearted will wield the language but imperfectly; the writer or speaker whose effort is unsparing will likewise command Gujarati that is perfect; nay, it may even be polished. Gujarati, of the Aryan family, a daughter of Sanskrit, related to some of the best languages—who dare call her undeveloped?

May God bless her! May she speak, till the end of ages, of wisdom and learning ever the best and of true religion. May God, the Creator, grant us that we hear her praises from the mother and the student, for ever and for ever.

Thus, we see that the failure of the movement to impart education through the medium of Bengali in Bengal does not show any inherent imperfection in that language or the futility of such an effort. We have considered the point about imperfection; as for futility, the experiment in Bengal does not prove it. If anything, it only shows the incompetence of those who made the effort, or their lack of faith in it.

In the North, Hindi is certainly making good progress. But a persistent effort to use it as the medium of instruction has been made only by the Arya Samajists in the *gurukulas*.

In Madras, the movement for using the mother tongue as the medium of education started only a few years ago. The Telugu people are more active in this respect than the Tamilians. The latter are so dominated by the influence of English that they have little enthusiasm for making an effort to use Tamil as the medium of instruction. In the Telugu-speaking region, English education has not yet penetrated to the same extent. Therefore, the people in that part use the mother tongue more than the Tamilians. The Telugu people are not only carrying on experiments to impart education through their own language but have also started a movement for the redistribution of India on the basis of language. The movement is of recent origin, and is as yet in the initial stage. But so vigorous is their effort that it is not unlikely that we may see the idea being given a practical shape before long. There are rocks on the way, but their leaders have given me the impression that they have the strength all right to break them.

Maharashtra is making the same attempt, sponsored by the great and noble Prof. Karve[1]. Shri Nayak holds the same view. Private schools have taken up the task. With great effort, Prof. Vijapurkar[2] has revived his plan and we shall shortly see his school functioning. He had drawn up a plan for preparing text-books. Some of these have already been printed, others are ready in manuscript. The teachers of that school never wavered in their faith. If, unfortunately, it had not been closed, it would have by now settled the controversy whether or not Marathi can serve as the medium of education even at the highest level.

In Gujarat, too, this movement has got started. We know about it from the essay of R. B. Hargovinddas Kantawala[3]. Prof. Gajjar[4] and the late Diwan Bahadur Manibhai Jasbhai may be regarded as the leaders of this movement. It is now for us to decide whether or not we should help the growth of the seeds sown by these persons. To my mind, there is no doubt that the more we delay, the greater our loss.

It requires a minimum of 16 years to complete one's education through the medium of English. If the same subjects were taught through the mother tongue, it would take ten years at the most. This is the opinion expressed by many experienced teachers. A saving of six years for each of the thousands of students means a saving of thousands of years for the nation.

Education through a foreign language entails an excessive strain which only our boys could bear; they must needs pay dearly for it, though. To a large extent, they lose the capacity of shouldering any other burden afterwards. Our graduates, therefore, are a useless lot, weak of body, without any zest for work, and mere imitators. They suffer an atrophy of the creative faculty and of the capacity for original thinking, and grow up without the spirit

[1] Dhondo Keshav Karve (1858-1962); social reformer and pioneer educationist; established the Shrimati Nathubai Damodar Thakersey University for Women in Poona (1915); was awarded "Bharat Ratna", the highest Indian award, in 1958; *vide* also Vol. VI, p. 29.

[2] V. G. Vijapurkar (1863-1925); pioneer of national education who founded, in collaboration with Lokamanya Tilak, the Samartha Vidyalaya at Talegaon

[3] 1849-1931; was Director of Public Instruction, Baroda State; *vide* Vol. V, pp. 89-90.

[4] Tribhuvandas Kalyandas Gajjar (1863-1920); an eminent student of Chemistry; founded Kalabhavan, a technical school, in Baroda in 1890 and served as its Principal; he promoted the establishment of the Alembic Chemical Works in Baroda.

of enterprise and the qualities of perseverance, courage and fearlessness. That is why we are unable to make new plans or carry out those we make. A few who do show promise of these qualities usually die young. An Englishman has said that there is the same difference between Europeans and the people of other countries as between an original piece of writing and its impression on a piece of blotting paper. The element of truth in this statement is not to be attributed to any natural or innate incapacity on the part of the Asians. The reason lies, in a large measure, in the unsuitable medium of instruction. The natives of South Africa are enterprising, strongly built and endowed with character. They do not have such evils as child marriage, etc., which we have, and yet their condition is similar to ours. Why? Because the medium of their education is Dutch. They are able to acquire mastery over the language within a short period as we do [over English], and like us they, too, become weak of body and mind at the end of their education and often turn out to be mere imitators. From them, too, originality disappears along with the mother tongue. It is only we, the English-educated people, who are unable to assess the great loss that results. Some idea of it may be had if we estimate how little has been our influence on the general mass of our people. The occasional remarks which our parents are led to make about the worthlessness of our education have some point. We get ecstatic over the achievements of Bose[1] and Ray[2]. But I am convinced that, had we been having our education through the mother tongue for 50 years, a Bose or a Ray would have occasioned no surprise among us.

Ignoring for a while the question whether or not the new zeal and energy being exhibited by the Japanese at present is directed into the right channels, we find their enterprise really most remarkable. They have brought about the awakening of their people through the use of the mother tongue. That is why everything that they do bears the stamp of originality. They are now in a position to teach their teachers. They have belied the comparison [of non-European peoples] with blotting paper. The life of the Japanese is throbbing with vitality and the world looks on in amaze-

[1] Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose (1858-1937); eminent Indian scientist, author of books on plant physiology; founder, Bose Research Institute, Calcutta

[2] Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944); professor of Chemistry at Presidency College, Calcutta; author of *History of Hindu Chemistry*, educationist and patriot

ment. The system under which we are educated through a foreign language results in incalculable harm.

The continuity that should exist, on the one hand, between the culture the child imbibes along with the mother's milk and the sweet words it receives and, on the other, the training school, is broken when education is imparted through a foreign tongue. Those who are responsible for this are enemies of the people, howsoever honest their motives. To be a voluntary victim of this system of education is to betray one's duty to one's mother. The harm done by this education received through a foreign tongue does not stop here but goes much further. It has created a gulf between the educated classes and the masses. We do not know them and they do not know us. They regard us as sahibs to be feared and may distrust us. If this state of affairs continues very long, the time may come when Lord Curzon's[1] charge that the educated classes do not represent the common people would be true.

Fortunately, our educated classes appear to be awakening from their slumber. Now that they are beginning to come in contact with the people, they themselves realize the handicaps described above. How may they infect the people with their own enthusiasm? English certainly will not avail us, whereas we have little or no aptitude to do the thing through Gujarati. I always hear people say that they experience great difficulty in expressing themselves in the mother tongue. This barrier dams up the current of popular life. Macaulay's[2] motive in introducing English education was sincere. He despised our literature. His contempt infected us, too, and we also lost our balance. Indeed, we have left our masters, the English, far behind us in this matter. Macaulay wanted us to become propagandists of Western civilization among our masses. His idea was that English education would help us to develop strength of character and then some of us would disseminate new ideas among the people. It would be irrelevant here to consider whether or not those ideas were good enough to be spread among the people. We have only to consider the question of the medium of instruction. We saw in English education an opportunity to earn money and, therefore, gave importance to the use of English. Some learned patriotism from it. Thus the original

[1] 1859-1925; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1899-1905

[2] Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59); President of the General Committee of Public Instruction and Law Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council; recommended, in his Education Minute of February 2, 1835, the introduction of English education in India. *Vide* Vol. V, pp. 89-91.

idea became secondary and we suffered much harm from the use of English which extended beyond Macaulay's original intention.

If we had political power in our hands, we would have discovered the error soon enough and would have found it impossible to give up the mother tongue. The officials did not give it up. Many perhaps do not know that our court language is supposed to be Gujarati. The Government gets the laws translated into Gujarati as well. Speeches read at durbars are translated into Gujarati simultaneously. We know that in currency notes Gujarati is used alongside with English. Mathematical calculations which land-surveyors have to learn are difficult. If they had to do so through English, the work of the Revenue Department would have become very expensive. So they evolved Gujarati terminology for the use of the surveyors. These terms will give us a pleasant surprise. If we have a sincere love for our language, we can this very moment put to use the resources at our disposal. If lawyers start using Gujarati for their work, much of the clients' money would be saved. Clients would also get the requisite knowledge of law and come to know their rights. The expenses on the services of interpreters would also be saved. Legal terms would pass into current use. Of course, lawyers would have to put themselves to some trouble to do all this. I believe, and the belief is supported by experience, that this will not harm the interests of the client. There is no reason to fear that arguments in Gujarati would carry less weight with the Court than in English. It is compulsory for Collectors and other Government officials to know Gujarati. But, because of our unreasoning craze for English, we allow their knowledge to rust.

It has been contended that there was nothing wrong in our people learning English and using it for earning money and cultivating a sense of patriotism through it. But the contention has no bearing on the use of English as the medium of instruction. We shall respect a person who learns English for acquiring wealth or for doing good to the country. But we cannot, on this account, assert that English should be used as the medium of instruction. All that is intended here is to bring out the harmful consequences of English having established itself as the medium of education because of these two developments. There are some who hold that English-knowing people alone have displayed patriotism. For the past two months, we have been witnessing something very different. We may, however, accept this claim with the modification that others never had the opportunity which the English-knowing people had. The patriotism induced by the knowledge

of English has not been infectious. Real patriotism is an expanding force which is ever propagating itself. The patriotism of English-knowing people lacks this quality.

It is said that, however correct these arguments, the idea is not practicable today. "It is a pity that the study of other subjects should have to suffer because of the excessive importance given to English. And it is to be deplored that much of our mental energy is used up in mastering it. But, in my humble opinion, the way we are placed in relation to English leaves us no alternative but to accept the present arrangement and then find a way out." This is the view not of any ordinary writer but of one of the foremost scholars of Gujarat and a great lover of our mother tongue. We cannot but take into account anything that Acharya Dhruva[1] says. Few can claim to have the experience that he has. He has rendered great service in the fields of education and literature. He has a perfect right to advise and criticize. That being so, a man like me has to think twice before expressing a different opinion. Shri Anandshankarbhai has expressed in courteous language the view held by the entire body of the advocates of English. We are in duty bound to give consideration to this point of view. Besides, my position in respect of this is somewhat awkward. I am conducting an experiment in National Education under his guidance and supervision. In this experiment we are using the mother tongue as the medium of education. In view of such close relations between us, I naturally hesitate to write anything in criticism of his views. Fortunately, Acharya Dhruva has considered education through English and that through the mother tongue only as experiments and has not expressed any definite opinion about either. I do not, therefore, feel as much hesitation in voicing my opposition to the above view as I otherwise would.

We attach excessive importance to our relationship with English. I am aware that we cannot discuss this question with unrestricted freedom in this Conference. But it is not improper to tell even those who cannot take part in political affairs that the British rule in India should be for the good of our country. There can be no other justification for it. The British rulers themselves admit that for one nation to rule over another is an intolerable situation for both, that it is evil and harms both. This is accepted in principle in discussions which recognize the altruistic point of view. Therefore, if it is proved to the satisfaction of both the rulers

[1] Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva; Sanskrit scholar and man of letters; Vice-Chancellor, Benares Hindu University, 1920-37

and the ruled that education through English saps the mental energy of our people, then, no time should be lost in changing the medium of instruction. The obstacles that lie in the way will then be a challenge to us. If this view is accepted, it should not be necessary to give any further argument to convince those who, like Acharya Dhruva, admit the [present] drain on our mental energy.

I do not think it necessary to consider whether or not the adoption of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction will have any adverse effect on the knowledge of English. It is not essential for all educated Indians to have a mastery of this alien language. Not only that, I even maintain, in all humility, that it is unnecessary to go out of one's way to create the desire for such mastery.

It is true that some Indians will have to learn English. Acharya Dhruva seems to have looked at this question only from the point of view of higher education. If, however, we consider it from all angles, it will be seen that two classes of people will need to learn English:

1. Public-spirited people who possess special aptitude for languages, have time on their hand and want to study English literature in order to put the fruits of their learning before our people, or use them in their contacts with the rulers.
2. Those who want to use their knowledge of English for economic gain.

There is no harm in giving both these groups a thorough knowledge of English as an optional subject. We should even provide the necessary facilities for it. But in this arrangement the medium of instruction will be the mother tongue. Acharya Dhruva fears that, if we do not adopt English as the medium but learn it merely as a foreign language, it will share the fate of Persian, Sanskrit, etc. I must say, with due respect to the Acharya, that this view is not quite correct. There are many Englishmen who know French well and are able to use it satisfactorily for their work even though they received their education through English. In India, too, there are a number of Indians whose knowledge of French is quite good, though they learned it through the medium of English. The truth is that, when English comes to occupy its own place and the mother tongue has gained its rightful status, our minds which are imprisoned at present will be set free from the prison-house and, for brains which are well cultivated, well exercised and yet fresh, learning English will not be too much of a strain. I even believe that the English we learn under such

conditions will be more of a credit to us than it is at present. What is more, with our intelligence vigorous and fresh, we shall be able to use it to better advantage. From the practical point of view of gain and loss, the course proposed will be found effective in promoting all our interests.

When we start receiving education through our own language, our relations in the home will take on a different character. Today, we cannot make our wives real life-companions. They have very little idea of what we do outside. Our parents know nothing about what we learn at school. If, however, we were to receive education through our mother tongue, we would find it easy to educate the washerman, the barber, the *Bhangi*[1] and others who serve us. In England, they discuss politics with the hair-dresser while having a hair-cut. Here, we cannot do so even with the members of our own families. The reason is not that they are ignorant. They, too, know as much as the English barber. We talk with them on the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and of holy places, because it is these things which our people hear and learn about. But, the knowledge we get at school does not seep down to others, not even to the members of our families, because we cannot impart to them what we learn in English.

At present the proceedings of our Legislative Assemblies are in English. It is the same story with other bodies. Consequently, the riches of our knowledge lie buried in the ground, much like the wealth of the miser. The same thing happens in our courts of law. The judges offer useful counsel. Litigants are eager enough to know what they say, but they get to know nothing except the dry judgment at the end. They cannot even follow the arguments of their lawyers. It is the same with doctors, educated in schools through English. They cannot educate the patients as may be required. They do not even know the Gujarati names for the various parts of the body. In consequence, most of them show no interest in their patients except to write out prescriptions for them. It is said that, in our thoughtlessness, we allow huge masses of water flowing down the hills to go waste. In the same way, we produce precious manure worth millions, but, in the result, we get only diseases. Similarly, crushed under the weight of English and wanting in foresight, we fail to give our people what they are entitled to get. This is no exaggeration. It only expresses the intensity of my feeling on this point. We shall have to pay heavily for our disregard of the mother tongue. This has

[1] One of the class attending to scavenging work

already done us great harm. I consider it the first duty of the educated to save our masses from any further harm on this account.

There can be no limit to the development of Gujarati, the language of Narasinh Mehta[1], the language in which Nandshankar wrote *Karanghelo*[2], which has been cultivated by writers like Navalram[3], Narmadashankar[4], Manilal[5], Malabari[6], in which the late poet Rajchandra[7], uttered his immortal words, a language which has Hindu, Muslim and Parsi communities to serve it, which has had, among those who use it, men of holy lives, men of wealth, and daring sailors voyaging across the seas, and in which heroic stories celebrating Mulu Manek and Jodha Manek[8] even today resound in the hills of Kathiawad. What else can one expect of Gujaratis if they do not use such a language for their education? The pity is that the point needs to be argued.

Finally, while bringing this topic to a close, I draw your attention to the articles of Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta on this subject. Gujarati translations of these articles have been published and I suggest that you read them. You will find in them many ideas which support these views.

If, now, we are convinced that it is good to adopt the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, the next thing is to consider the steps to implement the decision. Without going into any argument, I set down what these steps should be just in the order in which they occur to me:

1. English-knowing Gujaratis should never, intentionally or inadvertently, use English among themselves.

[1] 1414-79; Saint-poet of Gujarat; one of his poems, *Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye*, describing the character of the true devotee of God, was Gandhiji's favourite hymn.

[2] Pioneer novel in Gujarati about the last independent Hindu king of Gujarat

[3] Navalram Laxmishankar Pandya (1836-1888); Gujarati man of letters

[4] Gujarati poet famed for his patriotic compositions; *vide* Vol. VI, pp. 480, 493.

[5] Son of Revashankar Jhaveri, friend of Gandhiji; Gujarati thinker and writer. Swami Vivekanand refers in one of his letters to a paper by him which was read at one of the sectional meetings of the Parliament of Religions.

[6] Behramji Mervanji Malabari (1854-1912); poet, journalist and social reformer

[7] Rajchandra Raojibhai Mehta, Jain thinker, poet and jeweller; *vide An Autobiography*, Part II, Ch. I.

[8] They fought against the advance of British rule in the manner of medieval outlaws.

2. Those who possess a sound knowledge of both English and Gujarati should translate into Gujarati good and useful books or ideas in English.
3. Societies for the promotion of education should get text-books prepared.
4. The rich among us should start schools in various places for imparting education through Gujarati.
5. At the same time, various Conferences and Educational Associations should petition the Government for using the mother tongue as the sole medium of instruction. Courts and legislatures should carry on their proceedings in Gujarati and people should also use Gujarati in all their work. The prevailing practice of selecting only those who know English for lucrative posts should be changed and the candidates should be selected according to merit and without discrimination on the basis of language. A petition should also go to the Government that schools be opened where Government servants may acquire the necessary knowledge of Gujarati.

Exception may be taken to this programme on one count. It will be said that in the Legislative Assembly[1] there are Marathi, Sindhi and Gujarati members and, maybe, from Karnatak as well. The difficulty is serious enough, but not insurmountable. The Telugu-speaking people have already raised this question and there is no doubt that some day there will have to be a reorganization of provinces on the basis of language. But, meanwhile, members of the Assembly should have the right to speak either in Hindi or in their mother tongue. If you find this suggestion ridiculous today, I need only say—with due respect to you—that most radical suggestions seem similarly ridiculous in the beginning and on a superficial view. I am of the opinion that the progress of our country will largely depend on our deciding aright the question of the medium of education. I think, therefore, that my suggestion is of great consequence. When the mother tongue is better esteemed and has been restored to its rightful status—that of an official language—it will reveal powers and capacities undreamt of at present.

As we have had to consider the question of the medium of education, so also is it necessary to consider that of the national language. If this is to be English, it must be made a compulsory subject.

[1] The reference is to the legislature of the Bombay Presidency, which included Sind.

Can English become our national language? Some of our learned men, good patriots, contend that even to argue that English should become the national language betrays ignorance, that it is already so. His Excellency the Viceroy[1] in his recent speech merely expressed the hope that it would occupy this place. His zeal did not carry him as far as to say that it had already become our national language and that there could be no question about it. He believes, however, that English will spread in the country day by day, enter our homes, and finally attain the exalted status of a national language. On a superficial consideration, this view appears correct. Looking at the educated section of our population, one is likely to gain the impression that, in the absence of English, all our work would come to a stop. But deeper reflection will show that English cannot, and ought not to, become our national language.

Let us see what are the requirements of a national language:

1. It should be easy to learn for Government officials.
2. It should be capable of serving as a medium of religious, economic and political intercourse throughout India.
3. It should be the speech of large numbers of Indians.
4. It should be easy for every Indian to learn.
5. In choosing such a language, considerations of temporary or passing circumstances should not count.

English does not fulfil any of these requirements.

The first point ought to have been placed last, but I have purposely reversed the order because it seems as though English fulfils it. Closer examination will, however, show that even at the present moment it is not for officials an easy language to learn or handle. The Constitution, under which we are being ruled, envisages that the number of British officials will progressively decrease until finally only the Viceroy and a few others are left here. Even now, the majority of people in Government services are Indians and their number will increase as time passes. I think no one will deny that for them English is more difficult than any Indian language.

As regards the second requirement, I think that religious intercourse through English is an impossibility unless our people throughout the land start speaking English. Spreading English among the masses to this extent appears quite impossible.

English simply cannot satisfy the third requirement as it is not the speech of any very large number of Indians.

[1] Lord Chelmsford (1868-1933); Viceroy of India, 1916-21

The fourth also cannot be met by English because it is not relatively an easy language for all our people to learn.

Considering the fifth point, we see that the status which English enjoys today is temporary; as a permanent arrangement, the position is that the need for English in national affairs will be, if at all, very slight. It will be required for dealings with the British Empire and will remain the language of diplomacy between different countries within the Empire; this is a different matter. It will certainly remain necessary for such purposes. We do not grudge English anything. We only want that it should not overstep its proper limits; this is all that we insist upon. English will remain the imperial language and accordingly we shall require our Malaviyas, our Shastris and our Banerjeas to learn it,[1] confident that they will enhance the glory of India in other lands. But English cannot be the national language of India. To give it that position will be like introducing Esperanto into our country. To think that English can become our national language betrays weakness, as the attempt to introduce Esperanto would betray sheer ignorance.

Which language, then, fulfils all the five requirements? We shall have to admit that it is Hindi.

I call that language Hindi which Hindus and Muslims in the North speak and which is written either in Devanagari or Urdu script. There has been some objection to this definition.

It is argued that Hindi and Urdu are two different languages. But this is incorrect. Both Hindus and Muslims speak the same language in North India. The difference has been created by the educated classes. That is, educated Hindus Sanskritize their Hindi with the result that Muslims cannot follow it. Muslims of Lucknow Persianize their Urdu and make it unintelligible to Hindus. To the masses both these languages are foreign and so they have no use for them. I have lived in the North and have mixed freely with both Hindus and Muslims, and, though my knowledge of Hindi is limited, I have never found any difficulty in carrying on communication through it with them. Therefore, call it Hindi or Urdu as you like, the language of the people in North India is the same thing—basically. Write it in the Urdu script and call it Urdu, or write it in the Nagari script and call it Hindi.

There now remains the question of the script. For the present, Muslims will certainly use the Urdu script and most of the Hindus

[1] Madan Mohan Malaviya, Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Surendranath Banerjea were pre-eminent in their masterly use of the English language.

the Devanagari. I say "most" because thousands of Hindus even today write in the Urdu script and some even do not know the Devanagari script. In the end, when Hindus and Muslims will have ceased to regard each other with distrust, when the causes for such distrust have disappeared, the script which has greater range and is more popular will be more widely used and thus become the national script. In the intervening period, Hindus and Muslims who desire to write their petitions in the Urdu script should be free to do so and these should be accepted at all Government offices.

No other language can compete with Hindi in satisfying these five requirements. Next to Hindi comes Bengali. But the Bengalis themselves make use of Hindi outside Bengal. The Hindi-speaking man speaks Hindi wherever he goes and no one feels surprised at this. The Hindu preachers and the Mahomedan Moulvis always deliver their religious discourses in Hindi and Urdu and even the illiterate masses understand them. Even an unlettered Gujarati, when he goes to the North, attempts to speak a few Hindi words, but the man from the North who works as gate-keeper for the Bombay businessman declines to speak in Gujarati and it is the latter, his employer, who is obliged to speak to him in broken Hindi. I have heard Hindi spoken even in far-off Dravidian provinces[1]. It is not correct to say that in Madras one needs English. Even there, I have used Hindi for all my work. In the trains, I have heard hundreds of Madrasi passengers speaking to others in Hindi. Besides, the Muslims of Madras know good enough Hindi. It should be noted that Muslims throughout India speak Urdu and they are found in large numbers in every province. Thus Hindi has already established itself as the national language of India. We have been using it as such for a long time. The birth of Urdu itself is due to the aptness of Hindi for this purpose.

Muslim kings could not make Persian or Arabic the national language. They accepted the Hindi grammar and, employing the Urdu script, used more Persian words. They could not use a foreign tongue in their dealings with the masses. It is not as if the British are unaware of this position. Those who know anything about military affairs know that they have had to adopt Hindi and Urdu technical terms for use with the sepoys.

Thus, we see that Hindi alone can become our national language, though the matter presents some difficulty to the educated classes of Madras.

[1] These constitute today the Southern States of Andhra, Kerala, Mysore and Madras, the home of people speaking languages of the Dravidian group.

For Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, Sindhis and Bengalis, the thing is very easy. In a few months they can acquire enough command of Hindi to be able to use it for all-India intercourse. It is not so easy for Tamil friends. Tamil and other languages of the South belong to the Dravidian group. The structure and the grammar of these languages are different from those of Sanskrit. There is nothing in common between these two groups except certain words. But the difficulty in learning Hindi is confined to the present educated classes only. We are entitled to trust to their patriotic spirit and hope that they will make a special effort to learn Hindi. As for the future, if Hindi attains its due status, it will be introduced in every school in Madras and there will be increased possibilities of contact between Madras and other provinces. English has failed to reach the Dravidian masses, but Hindi will do so in no time. The Telugu people have already started moving in this direction. If this Conference reaches a decision on the question of the national language, we shall have to think of ways and means of implementing the decision. The measures suggested for the promotion of the mother tongue could, with suitable modifications, be applied to the national language as well. The difference is that the responsibility for making Gujarati the medium of instruction in our province will have to be shouldered mainly by us, whereas, in the movement to popularize the national language, the whole country will play its part.

We have discussed the question of the medium of instruction, the national language and, incidentally, the place of English. We have now to consider whether there are any defects in the present system of education in the schools.

There is no difference of opinion on this point. Both the Government and public opinion condemn the present system. There are, however, differences of view regarding what aspects are fit to be preserved and what to be rejected. I am not competent enough to discuss these differences. I shall only venture to place before this Conference my own conclusions.

Since education is not exactly my sphere of work, I feel diffident in saying anything on this subject. When I see a person talk about a thing of which he has no practical experience and which is, therefore, outside his range, I want to tell him off and grow impatient with him. It would be natural for a lawyer to feel impatient and angry with a physician talking of law. In the same way, I hold that those who have no experience in the field of education have no right to offer criticism on matters connected with it.

I should, therefore, like to say a few words about my qualifications to speak on this subject.

I started thinking about modern education[1] twenty-five years ago. I had my children and the children of my brothers and sisters to look after. I was aware of the defects in our schools. I therefore carried out experiments on my children. No doubt, I tossed them about a good deal in the process. Some I sent to one place and some to others. A few I taught myself. My dissatisfaction with the prevailing system remained the same as ever even after I had left for South Africa, and I had to apply my mind further to the subject. The management of the Indian Education Society[2] was in my hands for a long time. I never sent my boys to school. My eldest son was a witness to the different stages through which I passed. He left me in disappointment and studied at a school in Ahmedabad for some time. But, as he realized later, this did not benefit him particularly. I am convinced that those whom I did not send to school have not stood to suffer and that they have received a good training indeed. I am conscious of their deficiencies, but these are due to the fact that they grew up while my experiments were in their early stages and they were, therefore, victims of the modifications which the experiments went through despite the continuity of the general pattern. During the satyagraha struggle in South Africa, there were fifty boys studying under my supervision.[3] The general line of work in the school was laid down by me. It had nothing in common with the system in vogue in Government or other schools. A similar effort is now being made here and a National School[4] has been started in Ahmedabad with the blessings of Acharya Dhruva and other scholars. It is now five months old. Prof. Sankalchand Shah, formerly of the Gujarat College, is its Principal. He received his education under Prof. Gajjar and there are many other lovers of the language associated with him. In the main, the responsibility for the scheme is mine, but it has the active approval of all the teachers connected with it. They have dedicated themselves to the work, content to receive a salary just enough to meet their needs. Though circumstances do not permit me to undertake actual teaching work

[1] For Gandhiji's views on the subject, *vide An Autobiography*, Part IV, Chs. XXXII to XXXVI, also Vol. IV, pp. 332-3 and Vol. IX, pp. 135-9, 208.

[2] The reference is to the Natal Indian Education Association; *vide* Vol. II, p. 320, and *Satyagraha in South Africa*, Ch. VI.

[3] This was at Phœnix School; *vide* Vol. IX, pp. 119, 135-9.

[4] The Gujarat Vidyapeeth in Ahmedabad

in this school, its affairs constantly engage my attention. Thus, my contribution is more like an amateur's but, I believe, not altogether devoid of thought. I would request you to keep this in mind in considering my criticism of the prevailing system of education.

It has always appeared to me that the present system of education pays no attention to the general pattern of life in our families. Naturally enough, our needs were not taken into account when the scheme was drawn up.

Macaulay despised our literature. He thought we were over-much given to superstitions. Most of those who drew up this scheme were utterly ignorant of our religion. Some of them thought that it was a false religion. Our scriptures were regarded as mere collections of superstitions. Our civilization seemed full of defects to them. Because we had fallen on evil times, it was thought that our institutions must be defective. With the best of motives, therefore, they raised a faulty structure. Since a fresh start was being made, the planners could only think of the immediate needs of the situation. The whole thing was devised with this idea in mind, that the rulers would need lawyers, doctors, and clerks to help them and that the people should have the new knowledge. Consequently, books were written without any regard for our way of living. Thus, to use an English proverb, "The cart was placed before the horse".

Shri Malabari said that, if History and Geography were to be taught to children, a beginning should be made with the history and geography of the home. I remember, however, that I was made to memorize the counties of England, with the result that an interesting subject like geography became poison to me. I found nothing in History to enthuse me. History is a good means of inculcating patriotism. But the way it was taught in the school gave me no reason to take pride in this country. To learn that, I have had to read other books.

In teaching Arithmetic and other allied subjects, too, the traditional method hardly finds any place. It is almost completely abandoned. With the disappearance of the indigenous method of learning tables, we have lost the capacity for making speedy calculations which our elders possessed.

Science tends to be dry and dull. Our children cannot make much use of what they are taught in this field. A science like astronomy which should be taught to the boys in the open by actually showing them the stars in the sky is taught through books. I do not think many boys remember how to decompose water into its constituent elements once they leave school.

As to Hygiene, it is no exaggeration to say that it is not taught at all. We do not know, after 60 years of education, how to protect ourselves against epidemics like cholera and plague. I consider it a very serious blot on the state of our education that our doctors have not found it possible to eradicate these diseases. I have seen hundreds of homes. I cannot say that I have found any evidence in them of a knowledge of hygiene. I have the greatest doubt whether our graduates know what one should do in case one is bitten by a snake. If our doctors could have started learning medicine at an earlier age, they would not make such a poor show as they do. This is the disastrous result of the system under which we are educated. People in almost all the parts of the world have managed to eradicate the plague. Here it seems to have made a home and thousands of Indians die untimely deaths. If this is to be attributed to poverty, it would still be up to the Education Department to answer why, even after 60 years of education, there is poverty in India.

Let us now turn our attention to the subjects which are not taught at all. All education must aim at building character. I cannot see how this can be done except through religion. We are yet to realize that gradually we are being reduced to a state in which we shall have lost our own without having acquired the new. I cannot go more into this, but I have met hundreds of teachers and they sighed in pain as they told me of their experiences. This is an aspect which the Conference cannot but deeply ponder over. If pupils in schools lose their character, everything will have been lost.

In our country, 85 to 90 per cent of people are engaged in agriculture. Needless to say that no knowledge of this particular field of work can be too much. And yet it has no place at all in the school syllabus up to the end of the high school education. It is only in India that such an anomalous position can exist.

The weaving industry is also falling into ruin. It provided work to farmers during their free hours. The craft finds no place in the curriculum. Our education can only produce clerks and, its general tendency being what it is, even goldsmiths, blacksmiths and cobblers, once they are caught up in its meshes, become clerks. We desire that everyone should have a good education. But how will it profit us if our education makes us all clerks?

Military science finds no place in our education. Personally, I am not unhappy over this. I even regard it as an accidental gain. But the people want to learn the use of arms. Those who do so should not be denied the opportunity of learning it. But

this science seems to have been completely lost sight of, as it were, in our scheme of education.

Nowhere do I find a place given to music. It exercises a powerful influence over us. We do not realize this vividly enough, otherwise we would have done everything possible to teach music to our boys and girls. The Vedic hymns seem to follow musical tunes in their composition. Harmonious music has the power to soothe the anguish of the soul. At times, we find restlessness in a large gathering. This can be arrested and calmed if a national song is sung by all. That hundreds of boys may sing a poem full of courage and the spirit of adventure and bravery and be inspired with the spirit of heroism is no commonplace fact. We have an example of the power of music in the fact that boatmen and other labourers raise, in unison, the cry of *Harahar* and *Allabeli* and this helps them in their work. I have seen English friends trying to fight cold by singing songs. Our boys learn to sing songs from popular plays in all manner of tunes and without regard to time and place, and try their hands on noisy harmoniums and other instruments, and this does them harm. If, instead, they were to be correctly trained in music, they would not waste their time singing, or attempting to sing, music-hall songs. Just as a trained singer never sings out of tune or at the wrong time, even so one who has learnt classical music will not go in for street music. Music must get a place in our efforts at popular awakening. The views of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami[1] on this subject are worthy of serious study.

I include in the term "physical training" sports, games, etc. These, too, have been little thought of. Indigenous games have been given up and tennis, cricket and football hold sway. Admittedly, these games are enjoyable. If, however, we had not been carried away by enthusiasm for all things Western, we would not have given up our inexpensive but equally interesting games like *gedi-dado*, *gilli-danda*, *kho-kho*, *mag-matali*, *kabaddi*, *kharo pat*, *nava nagelio*, *sat tali*, etc. Exercises which provided the completest training for every bodily organ and the old style gymnasium where they taught wrestling have almost totally disappeared. I think if anything from the West deserves copying, it is drill. A friend once remarked that we did not know how to walk, particularly when we had to walk in squads and keep step. Silently to walk in step, by hundreds and thousands of us in twos and fours, shifting the direc-

[1] 1877-1947; exponent of Oriental art and culture; Curator of Fine Arts Museum, U.S.A; author of *Transformation of Nature in Art*, *Dance of Shiva*, etc.

tions from time to time is something we can never do. It is not that such drill is useful only in actual battle. It can be of great use in many other activities in the sphere of public service. For example, in extinguishing fire, in rescuing people from drowning, in carrying the sick and disabled in a *doli*[1], etc., [previous practice in] drill is a valuable aid. Thus, it is necessary to introduce in our schools indigenous games, exercises and the Western type of drill.

The education of women is as faulty as that of men. No thought has been given to the relations of men and women or to the place of woman in Indian society.

Primary education for the two sexes can have much in common. There are important differences at all other levels. As Nature has made men and women different, it is necessary to maintain a difference between the education of the two. True, they are equals in life, but their functions differ. It is woman's right to rule the home. Man is master outside it. Man is the earner, woman saves and spends. Woman looks after the feeding of the child. She shapes its future. She is responsible for building its character. She is her children's educator, and hence, mother to the Nation. Man is not father [in that sense]. After a certain period, a father ceases to influence his son; the mother never abdicates her place. The son, even after attaining manhood, will play with the mother even as the child does. He cannot do that with his father.

If this is the scheme of Nature, and it is just as it should be, woman should not have to earn her living. A state of affairs in which women have to work as telegraph clerks, typists or compositors can be, I think, no good, such a people must be bankrupt and living on their capital.

Hence, just as, on the one hand, it is wrong to keep women in ignorance and under suppression, so, on the other, it is a sign of decadence and it is tyrannical to burden them with work which is ordinarily done by men.

There must be provision, therefore, for separate arrangements for the education of women after their attaining a certain age. They should be taught the management of the home, the things they should or should not do during pregnancy, and the nursing and care of children. Drawing up such a scheme presents difficulties. The idea is new. The right course would be to constitute a committee of men and women, of good character and

[1] Seat slung from a pole carried by two or more men on shoulders

well-informed, who would think further and arrive at conclusions, and ask them to produce a suitable plan for the purpose.

This committee should consider measures for the education of girls from the time that they cease to be children. There is, however, a very large number of girls who have been married off before puberty, and the number is increasing. Once they are married, they just disappear from the field. I have given my views on this in my foreword to the first book of the "Bhagini Samaj" series. I reproduce them here:

> We shall not solve the problem of women's education merely by educating girls. Victims of child marriage, thousands of girls vanish from view at the early age of twelve. They change into house-wives! Till this wicked custom has disappeared from among us, the husband will have to learn to be the wife's teacher. A great many of our hopes lie in women being educated on matters mentioned above. It seems to me that unless women cease to be a mere means of pleasure or cooks to us and come to be our life-companions, equal partners in the battle of life, sharers in our joys and sorrows, all our efforts are doomed to failure. There are men to whom their women are no better than animals. For this sad state, some of the Sanskrit sayings and a well-known *doha*[1] of Tulsidas may be held responsible. Tulsidas says at one place: "The drum, the fool, the Sudra, the animal and the woman—all these need beating."[2]
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> I adore Tulsidasji, but my adoration is not blind. Either this couplet is an interpolation, or, if it is his, he must have written it without much reflection, following the tradition in his time. As to the Sanskrit sayings, people seem to labour under the impression that every verse in that language was a scriptural precept. We must fight this impression and pluck out from its very root the general habit of regarding women as inferior beings. On the other hand, blinded by passion, many among us regard women as beautiful dolls to be adored as so many goddesses and decorate them with ornaments just as we have Thakorji[3] dressed up in new finery every few hours. We must keep away from this evil also. Ultimately, however, there can be salvation for us only when—and not until—our

[1] Couplet
[2] This is from *Ramacharitamanas.*
[3] The idol or image of God

women become to us what Uma[1] was to Shankar[2], Sita to Rama and Damayanti to Nala, joining us in our deliberations, arguing with us, appreciating and nourishing our aspirations, understanding, with their marvellous intuition, the unspoken anxieties of our outward life and sharing in them, bringing us the peace that soothes. This goal can hardly be achieved in the immediate future merely by starting girls' schools. As long as we have around our necks the noose of child marriage, men have to be teachers to their wives, and that not merely to make them literate. Gradually, it should be possible to introduce women to the subjects of politics and social reform. Literacy is not essential for this. The man, in such a case, will have to change his attitude to his wife. If a girl were treated as a pupil till she came of age, the husband observing *brahmacharya* the while, if we had not been pressed down by the weight of inertia, we would never subject a girl of twelve or fifteen to the agony of child-bearing. One ought to shudder at the very thought of it.

Classes are now conducted for married women and lectures arranged. All this is good as far as it goes. Those who are engaged in this work make a sacrifice of their time. This is to the credit side. It seems to me, however, that unless men simultaneously discharge the duty indicated above, these efforts will not produce much result. A little reflection will show this to be self-evident.

Wherever we look, we find heavy structures raised on weak foundations. Those selected as teachers for primary education may in courtesy be termed so, but in doing this we, in fact, misuse this word. Childhood is the most important period of one's life. Knowledge received during this period is never forgotten. But this is the period during which the child is allowed the least time [for learning] and is held prisoner in no matter what manner of school. I hold that, in our equipping high schools and colleges, we incur expense which this poor land can hardly bear. If, instead, primary education were to be given by well-educated and experienced teachers of high character, in surroundings which would reflect some regard for the beauty of Nature and safeguard the health of the pupils, we would see good results in a short time. We would not succeed in bringing about the desired change even

[1] Parvati, spouse of Shiva

[2] Shiva, one of the Hindu trinity of gods

if we double the monthly salaries of the present teachers. Big results cannot be brought about through such small changes. The very pattern of primary education must change. I know that this is a difficult proposition and that there are several obstacles in the way. All the same, it should not be beyond the power of the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal to find a solution to this problem.

I should, perhaps, say that it is not my intention to find fault with the teachers in primary schools. That they are able to show results beyond their powers is, in my opinion, to be attributed to our noble culture and traditions. I am sure that, given sufficient training and encouragement, these same teachers will show results of which we can have no conception at present.

I think it would be improper for me to say anything about the question, whether or not education should be free and compulsory. My experience is limited. Besides, the idea of imposing anything as duty on our people does not appeal to me and so I cannot reconcile myself to this addition to their obligations. It will be more appropriate at present to make education free but optional and make experiments. I visualize many difficulties in making education compulsory until we have left the days of autocracy behind us. The experience of the Baroda Government may be of some help in coming to a decision on this matter. My own investigation has led me to conclude against the advisability of compulsory education; but the investigation was not thorough and, therefore, no weight can be attached to it. I hope some of the delegates to this Conference will throw helpful light on the point.

I am convinced that petitioning the Government is not the royal road for correcting all the foregoing deficiencies. The Government cannot change things radically in a day. It is for leaders of the people to take the initiative in such ventures. The British Constitution leaves particular scope for such initiative. If we think that anything can be done only if the Government moves, we are not likely to realize our aims for ages. As they do in England, we must first make experiments and show results before asking the Government to adopt new measures. Whoever finds a deficiency in any field can try to correct it by his own efforts and, after he has succeeded, can move the Government for the desired improvement. For such pioneering ventures, it is necessary to establish a number of special educational bodies.

There is one great obstacle in the way—the lure of degrees. We think our entire life depends on success at examinations. This results in great harm to the people. We forget that a degree is useful only for those who want to go in for Government service.

But the edifice of national life is not to be raised on the salaried class. We also see that people are able to earn money quite well even without taking up any service. When those who are almost illiterate can become millionaires by their intelligence and shrewdness, there is no reason why the educated cannot do the same. If the educated would only give up their fear, they could be as capable as the unlettered.

If this lure of degrees could be shaken off, any number of private schools could flourish. No government can provide fully for all the education which the people need. In America, education is mostly a private enterprise. In England, too, private enterprise runs a number of institutions. They give their own certificates.

It will require Herculean efforts to put our education on a sound foundation. We shall have to make sacrifices and dedicate ourselves body, mind and soul to the task.

I think there is not much that we can learn from America, but one thing we would do well to copy. Some of the biggest educational institutions there are run by a huge Trust. Wealthy Americans have donated millions to this Trust. It runs a number of private schools. If it has a huge fund, it also has at its disposal the services of a number of learned men who love their country and are well-equipped physically. They inspect all these institutions and help them in maintaining academic standards. They provide help wherever and in whatever measure they think necessary. It is available to any institution which agrees to adopt the approved constitution. An enthusiastic campaign launched by this Trust carried the results of new researches in the field of agriculture to elderly peasants. We can have a similar plan in Gujarat. There is wealth here and scholarship, too, and love of religion has not altogether disappeared. Children are only waiting to be taught. If we can take up this venture, we may show to the Government in a few years that our efforts are in the right direction. I am sure the Government, then, will not fail to adopt the plan. Actual work will speak to better effect than a thousand petitions.

This suggestion covers the other two objects of the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal. The establishment of such a Trust will ensure both a continuous campaign for the spread of education and also practical work in that field. This done, everything else will follow. Evidently, therefore, it will not be easy work. Wealthy people are like the Government, in that they wake up only when we prod them. For this, *tapascharya* is the only means we have.

It is the first and last step in dharma. I take it that the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal is the embodiment of such *tapascharya*. When its secretaries and members are wholly possessed by the spirit of service and are also men of learning, money will pour forth on its own. Moneyed people are always sceptical. They have reason to be so. Therefore, if we want to please the goddess of wealth, we shall have first to prove our fitness.

Though we shall need plenty of money, we need not stress the matter overmuch. Anyone who would work for the spread of national education will, if uneducated, teach himself as he goes about his daily labour and then, sitting beneath a tree, teach those who want to learn. This is the way of the Brahmin dharma. Anyone who chooses may follow it. When we have such Brahmins, both wealth and power will bow in reverence before them.

I want the Gujarat Kelavani Mandal to have such unshakable faith; may God grant that it have.

In education lies the key to swaraj. Let political leaders wait on Mr. Montagu[1], if they want to. It does not matter if politics is out of bounds for this Conference. But the fact remains that all efforts are futile without the right kind of education, which is the special concern of this Conference. If we succeed in this, we succeed in all other things as well.

[From Gujarati]

Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti

7. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[After *October 20, 1917*][2]

CHI. BHAI MAGANLAL,

I have your letter. I leave the decision about Guruprasad to you. If you feel that he is really patriotic and can live on in the Ashram without quarrelling with anyone, and that he does the work assigned to him sincerely, I see no objection to sending him anything up to Rs. 10. But do that on your responsibility.

[1] Edwin Samuel Montagu (1879-1924); Secretary of State for India, 1917-22; visited India in November 1917, and was responsible, along with Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy, for the political reforms of 1918, later embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919.

[2] The speech at the Educational Conference referred to in the letter was delivered on October 20; *vide* the preceding item.

I do not want it to happen that I take a step and you suffer the consequence. I did not think that we would have to send him anything, nor did I know anything about his needs. All the same, we can accommodate a worthy person. Vrajlalbhai keeps fit enough. Fulchand must have recovered. Ask him to write to me about his wife's condition also. Ask Sankalchand to send me at once translation of the speech at the Educational Conference.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Mahadev Desai's hand: S.N. 6413

8. *SCHEME FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION*[1]

For many years past, several friends and I have felt that our present education is not national and that, in consequence, people do not get from it the benefit they ought to. Our children languish as a result of this education. They become incapable of any great achievement and the knowledge they acquire does not spread among the masses—not even among their families. Nor do the young people have any aim in mind in taking this modern education except to get a job and make money.

Prof. Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva writes :

> As, during the last five years or so, India stirred out of her sleep and opened her eyes, she found herself faced with the problem of her education. The people of India want to have a share in their government and, to be sure, they will get it. Are three-quarters of her population, then, to remain condemned to illiteracy? They are to pledge themselves to the use of swadeshi goods. Is their education, then, to remain without due provision for instruction in commerce and industry? India will become conscious of her self-respect; is she to be content, then, to have her ancient literature and her arts, her religions and her philosophy, expounded always by foreign scholars? These and other like aspirations for a fuller life, along with the changed circumstances, have invested the problem of education at the present day with especial importance and till, recognizing the seriousness of this all-important issue, we firmly adhere to certain principles

[1] This article, which appeared as by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, is an elaboration of his earlier article: "National Gujarati School", *vide* Vol, XIII, pp. 332-4,

as fundamental to our education, we shall not have done our duty by ourselves and our country, in fact, by the humanity in us.

And again :

Social reform and religion seemed to be quite simple matters to the leaders of that generation, but the threads which go into the making of a religious life are many-coloured and closely inter-twined. Hindu society derives its vitality from its recognition of these two facts. It is the duty of the new age to understand this truth and order its life accordingly. The system of education in vogue in the last generation was defective as it limited itself to turning out government servants, lawyers and doctors.

Wherever I have travelled in India, I have discussed this question with the leaders and, without exception, everyone has admitted that our educational system must change. The following extract makes it quite clear that the Government did not consider all the needs of the people in devising this system :

We have, moreover, looked upon the encouragement of education as peculiarly important, because it is calculated not only to produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness, but to raise the moral character of those who partake of its advantages and so to supply you with servants to whose probity you may, with increased confidence, commit offices of trust in India.[1]

It is one of the recognized principles of education that it should be planned with a view to the needs of the people. This idea finds no place at all in our schools.

The system of education has to change, but to look to the Government for this will be sheer waste of time. The Government will wait on public opinion and, being foreign, move very timidly; it cannot understand our needs, its advisers may be ill-informed or they may have interests of their own to serve. For a variety of such reasons, it will probably be quite long before there is any serious change in the present system; the time that passes meanwhile, is so much loss to the people. It is, however, not intended to suggest here that we should not try to get the Government to move. Let petitions be made to it and let public opinion be ascertained. But the best petition to the Government will be an actual demonstration by us and this will also be the easiest way of cultivating public opinion. It has accordingly been decided, in consultation with some educated gentlemen, to start a national school.

[1] This and the subsequent quotations are English passages as quoted by Gandhiji in footnotes in the original Gujarati version of this article.

EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL

Education in the school will be entirely through the mother tongue. It is surprising that, while among other nations the mother tongue enjoys pride of place, among us this place belongs to English. This state of affairs is ultimately harmful to the people. The President of the first Gujarat Educational Conference, too, expressed the view that the medium of education should be the mother tongue. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was very emphatic in his speech that education should be through the mother tongue. The matter was specifically mentioned in the Government dispatch of 1854. It is not easy to understand how, in spite of that, the basis of education was altered. The dispatch said :

> It is neither our aim nor our desire to substitute the English for the vernacular dialects of the country. We have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages, which alone are understood by the great mass of the population. These languages, not English, have been put by us in the place of Persian in the administration of justice and in the intercourse between the officers of the Government and the people. It is indispensable, therefore, that in any general system of education, the studies of vernaculars should be assiduously attended to. And any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of the people whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high standard of knowledge and who cannot be expected to overcome the difficulties of a foreign language, can only be conveyed to them through one or other of these vernacular languages. We look, therefore, to the English language and the vernacular languages of India together as media for the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated in all schools in India of a sufficiently high class to maintain a school-master possessing the requisite qualifications.

His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, also gave an idea, in his address to the Conference of Directors [of Education] held in Delhi on February 22, of the harm that has resulted from English instead of the mother tongue having been assigned the chief place. He asked where the British people would have been if they had had to receive their education through a foreign tongue. His own reply was that many Britons would have given up their studies in sheer despair. He described the present method of imparting education through English as a "vicious system"[1]. These are his words :

[1] Gandhiji uses the English expression.

I refer to the relative claims of English and vernacular teaching. At the present moment, we rely on English as the medium of higher instruction. This is due mainly to the fact that English is the passport to employment and that vernacular text-books are not available, but the consequence is obvious. Students endeavour to grapple with abstruse subjects through the medium of a foreign tongue and in many cases, thanks to their mediocre acquaintance with that tongue, have perforce to memorize their text-books. We criticize adversely this tendency to memorize but to my mind it reflects credit on the zeal of the students who, rather than abandon their quest for knowledge, memorize whole pages, whole books which they understand but imperfectly. This is, of course, a mere travesty of education. . . .I would ask you and myself as University men how should we have fared in our education if it had been wholly through the medium of a foreign tongue. I doubt whether we would [not] have abandoned the attempt in despair; and I am lost in admiration for the gift of those boys who made a gallant attempt to surmount the difficulties imposed on them by a vicious system.

An attempt has been made in Poona to impart education through an Indian language, and, in the view of those who run the school, the result has been good. This view is shared by the Government and the public; we, too, aim at providing education through the mother tongue.

The President of the first [Gujarat] Educational Conference had pointed out in his speech that, if the mother tongue was adopted as the medium of instruction, it would require seven years to impart the knowledge which at present requires 11 years in the High School. This is no insignificant saving. The most important advantage of such a policy would be the reduction in the financial burden on the people.

Hindi has been included in the curriculum of this school for the simple reason that it is spoken by about 220 million people. If a language spoken by such large numbers of our countrymen can be taught [to the rest], they would all find it easy to understand the meaning of the various political movements. I am convinced that, in India, Hindi alone can occupy the position of a national language. It has a fine literature, too, and will therefore enrich our literatures.

The schools under the present dispensation make no provision for teaching the science of religion. It has been given a place in the curriculum of this school.

The pupils here will be trained in two occupations: (1) agriculture and (2) weaving. Incidental to these, they will get training in carpentry and smithy. They will also receive

instruction in Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology. In India, the foregoing occupations occupy the most important place and anyone who learns them will never have to go in search of a job.

Every pupil will be taught the means of preserving health and home remedies for common ailments. The pupil's physical training will receive no less attention than the education of his mind.

Every pupil will be taught five languages: (1) Gujarati (2) Hindi (3) Marathi (4) Sanskrit and (5) English.

Mathematics will include Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. In other words, the pupils will be brought up to the level of the present First Year of the College.

History-Geography : The history to be taught will be of Gujarat, India, England, Greece, Rome, and of modern times. During the last year, Philosophy of History and Sociology will also be taught. In Geography, the standard will not be inferior to what obtains in the schools at present.

In Astronomy, the elements of the subjects will be taught.

A study of Economics is also essential and will, accordingly, be provided for.

Some knowledge of law is useful to every person and provision will, therefore, be made for teaching it for practical purposes.

Drill has been introduced in the first year to provide recreation and exercise to the pupils.

Music has been introduced as an aid to recitation and also that one may understand something of the subject. All instruction in the first year will be oral. Such general knowledge as will help in the development of the child's mind, it is intended to convey to it as it plays about. Knowledge of colours, shapes, size, etc., can be conveyed in this way and, so conveyed, it will stimulate the child's powers of observation. Hence this aid to education will also be utilized as an integral part of the method.

India never knew the institution of examinations. The method is of recent introduction. It received no great importance in the dispatch of 1854. The system has lent itself to serious abuse, every subject being taught with an eye on the examination and the conviction firmly planted in the pupil's mind that passing the examination was all that was necessary. The teacher, too, has got into the habit of doing his work in the same spirit, as so much drudgery. Hence any knowledge that is acquired is superficial. Not a single subject is taught with thoroughness. The following passage is worth quoting in this context :

> In recent years, they [examinations] have grown to extravagant dimensions and their influence has been allowed to dominate the whole system of education in India with the result that instruction is confined to the rigid frame of prescribed courses, that all forms of training which do not admit of being tested by a written examination are liable to be neglected, and that most teachers and pupils are tempted to concentrate their energies not so much on genuine study as upon questions likely to be set by the examiner.

Having regard to the view that examinations are quite undesirable, pupils in this institution will be tested periodically from two points of view—whether the teacher has made the right effort and whether the pupil has followed. The pupil will be freed from the fear of examinations. The tests will be held by the teachers of the school and by others familiar with the institution. The expectation is that a pupil who has attended the school for ten years will be as well equipped as the present-day graduate. In addition, he will have a practical knowledge of agriculture and weaving. The use to which the student puts his abilities after leaving school will be the true measure of the worth of his education. Every opportunity will be taken to rid his mind of the fallacious notion that the aim of education is to get employment. At present, it is the general practice among business men to select for the better posts men who know English, and that from among those educated under the Government-controlled system. But they will have an alternative field for selection when scholars of this school go out on the completion of their studies. The people will then have some idea of the effectiveness of the method of education followed here. A businessman is not in love with a "degree"; his choice will fall on the efficient man.

If, after ten years of study, anyone wants to pursue a subject further, necessary arrangements for the purpose are left to the future.

Education Free

No fees will be charged in this school, the expenses being met from donations received.

Teachers

Paid teachers will be engaged and will be, all of them, grown-up men who have reached the college level or possess equivalent attainments. The idea is that children should have the best teachers in the early stages.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 21-10-1917

9. CONCLUDING SPEECH AT THE CONFERENCE[1]

BROACH,
October 21, 1917

I have been thanked already. Never and nowhere could I express all that I feel. It is services such as these which, I believe, lead to *moksha*[2]. For these three days, I have been extremely happy. I am thankful to Mr. Haribhai, for day and night he has been busy serving everyone. If anyone has been dissatisfied with him, I apologize to him on Mr. Haribhai's behalf. From a milch cow you may even bear a kick. I am in love with the mother tongue, crazy over it. I think we just cannot get on without it, can hope for no progress. It is for this reason that I urge its claims wherever I go. Seeing that my pleas have been of some avail here, I offer my thanks to you. Why should you thank me? If, nonetheless, you do, I shall have no patience to hear what you say. I hope the various committees will carry out what they have been charged with. All obstacles must yield to determined human effort. I am sorry that, for want of time, I have not been able to meet the wishes of the audience for a long speech. I thank you all, sisters and brothers. Only if I die for India shall I know that I was fit to live.

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 28-10-1917

10. SPEECH AT CONFERENCE OF HUMANITARIAN LEAGUE[3]

BROACH,
October 21, 1917

Ever since I came to know Mr. Anandashankar Dhruva, I have been all admiration for him. He is a priceless jewel of Gujarat; perhaps, the latter has not yet fully recognized his great-

[1] This was delivered on the second day of the Second Gujarat Educational Conference.

[2] Liberation as goal of life

[3] Gandhiji spoke on the second day of the Conference, while proposing a vote of thanks to the President, A. B. Dhruva.

ness. When he was elected President, I saw that this body knew its own worth too. Mr. Dhruva has proved to the entire Hindu world that the supreme virtue of non-violence has been accepted by all in India. Jainism and Hinduism are not so different as to justify our treating them as distinct religions. The religion named after Gautam Buddha cherishes the same ideals as Hinduism.

Mr. Dhruva is a jewel not only of Gujarat but of the whole of India. The rest of India does not know him because he has not come out into public life in Gujarat. He is a scholar of great distinction. I could see his scholarship even from his speeches. Practical ability such as his is very necessary in the affairs of this world. I have had much experience of these affairs and gone through a great deal. It was a pleasure to me to listen to his sincere words and I would simply love to be in his company.

Mr. Dhruva is a hidden jewel. He is well-informed about ancient and modern Hindu society. For the present generation, which is growing up in luxuries and building castles in the air and is, in its thoughtlessness, carried away by the flood of all these notions of reform, Mr. Dhruva is like a boat, a leader taking them back to the right place. Old men can value a flower aright. In like fashion, Mr. Dhruva, too, has shown due appreciation [of young people] and, mingling with them, given proof of his skill in bringing them round firmly to his views.

That the Humanitarian League could accept Mr. Dhruva as its President proves that the League has been working along sound lines and that it will work more energetically in future to place its humanitarian principles before the people and cultivate public opinion. And now I move the vote of thanks to the President which, I hope, you will all pass with acclamation.

[From Gujarati]

Mumbai Samachar, 23-10-1917

11. LETTER TO COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES SECRETARY

SATYAGRAHASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
October 31, 1917

THE SECRETARY TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES
DELHI

SIR,

I enclose herewith copy of a letter[1] recently addressed by me to the Press on the hardships of 3rd class railway passengers.

The hardships are of two kinds : those which are due to the neglect of the passengers themselves and those that can only be remedied by the Railway Companies. They may again be divided into those that can be dealt with without any great extra cost and those that can be dealt with only on a large outlay of money.

I recognize that the hardships falling under the last category cannot be effectively dealt with whilst the War is going on. They are due to insufficiency of accommodation. On this I venture to suggest that some check can certainly be exercised in the issue of tickets, and guards or other officials should be instructed to regulate the traffic. As it is, the strongest find their own seats without any supervision or control by the officials and the weaker ones often findthem selves left out. Officials should not only be instructed to regulate the traffic, but they should also be required to examine the state of the compartments from time to time and see that no passengers appropriate space to the discomfort of other passengers.

In so far as the passengers are themselves responsible for the evils I have described, notices should be pasted on the walls of the carriages and put up at the stations giving detailed instructions regarding the use of closets, etc. Bye-laws prohibiting dirty or offensive practices may be cautiously enforced. A book of instructions in the different vernaculars may be issued together with long-journey tickets and otherwise given gratis on demand. Co-operation of volunteers should be invited from the general public in the prosecution of this educative work.

As to the other grievances :

Station inspectors or the other officials should be directed to

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 547-51.

have the carriages and closets swept and cleaned at every junction or principal station.

Station closets ought to be kept scrupulously clean, earth and disinfectants should be used every time closets are used. This presupposes constant employment of *Bhangis* at every station. In my humble opinion, the importance of the matter demands such employment. It may be a wise thing to set apart special privies which any passenger may use on payment of a nominal fee. At present there is no privacy provided in the station latrines. I think that at a very small cost this can be provided.

There should be bathing facilities at all principal stations.

I understand that only licensed vendors are permitted to sell refreshments at the stations. A written tariff should be provided and cleanliness of refreshments and vendors should be ensured before the granting of licences. Third-class refreshment rooms should not be allowed to be in the dirty state in which they are at present, but should be kept scrupulously clean.

Untold difficulties are put in the way of the passengers getting their tickets on application. Often they are issued only a short time before the departure of trains. The result is bribery, a fight among passengers for the purchase of tickets and disappointment to many.

Waiting rooms at the principal stations need complete overhauling. There ought to be regulations for the observance of passengers. Benches should be provided in large numbers. They should be cleaned several times during the day. Rooms should be provided for the use of the fair sex.

In my humble opinion, all the evils except the provision of extra carriages can be dealt with at a very small additional cost to the railway administrations. What is needed is sympathy and due recognition of the rights of third-class passengers who provide the largest part of the income from passenger traffic.

Though the grievances here adverted to are old, they are pressing enough to demand immediate attention. I hope that your department will take up the matter at an early date. My services are at its disposal to be utilized in any manner it may deem fit.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

From a photostat of the draft in Gandhiji's hand: S. N. 6393; also N. A. I.: Railway Department Records: March 1918: 552-T-17: 1-24

12. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI MEHTA

SABARMATI,
Ashvin Vad 2 [November 1, 1917][1]

BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I had a talk about Viramgam.[2] I am expecting a reply. It ought to go and I have no doubt that it will.

The registered letter is with me. I shall do what you want me to do, in part at least, when the time comes.

Of course, I very much want to go to Kathiawad, but I don't know when I shall be able to. For the present, six months are reserved for Bihar.[3]

You must have recovered.

Yours,
MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

BHAI BHAGWANJI ANOOPCHAND MEHTA
VAKIL
SADAR
RAJKOT

From the postcard in Gujarati in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 3030. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] From the reference in the letter to Viramgam and "six months reserved for Bihar", the letter appears to have been written in 1917.

[2] The imposition of a Customs cordon at Viramgam, on the border between the Kathiawad States and British Indian territory was causing considerable hardship to railway passengers. Gandhiji's attention to the problem was first drawn by Motilal, a tailor; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. III. After thoroughly studying the subject, Gandhiji wrote to the Bombay Government concerning the grievance. Later he discussed it with the Governor, Lord Willingdon, and his secretary. Gandhiji raised the matter, in the course of an interview, with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, who promised redress. The levy was annulled on November 10; *vide* "Speech at Gujarat Political Conference-I" November 3, 1917; also "Resolutions at Gujarat Political Conference-II", November 5, 1917.

[3] Once the indigo labourers' problem in Champaran, Bihar, had been tackled, Gandhiji decided to devote his efforts to educational and sanitation work in the province.

13. SPEECH AT GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE-I[1]

[GODHRA,]
November 3, 1917

Lokamanya B. G. Tilak[2] having arrived late for the opening session, Gandhiji remarked:

I am not responsible for his being late. We demand swaraj. If one does not mind arriving late by three-quarters of an hour at a conference summoned for the purpose, one should not mind if swaraj too comes correspondingly late.

Gandhiji then read his speech.[3]

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am thankful to you all for the exalted position to which you have called me. I am but a baby of two years and a half in Indian politics.[4] I cannot trade here on my experience in South Africa. I know that, in these circumstances, acceptance of the position is to a certain extent an impertinence. I have accepted it, all the same, unable to resist the pressure of your overwhelming affection.

I am conscious of my responsibility. This Conference is the first of its kind in Gujarat. The time is most critical for the whole of India. The Empire is labouring under a strain never before experienced. My views do not quite take the general course. I feel that some of them run in the opposite direction. Under the circumstances, I am hardly qualified for this privileged position. The president of a meeting is usually its spokesman. I cannot pretend to lay any such claim. It is your kindness that gives me

[1] This was Gandhiji's presidential address at the first Political Conference to be held in Gujarat. It lasted three days and was largely attended by cultivators, petty traders and small land-holders.

[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); great Indian political leader, scholar and writer, popularly known as 'Lokamanya'; one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society, Poona and of the newspapers the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*; suffered six years' deportation for his criticism of the Government; took active part in the Home Rule campaign; *vide* also Vol. II, p. 380.

[3] The translation which follows is reproduced from *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, with some changes intended to bring it into closer conformity with the Gujarati original.

[4] Gandhiji had returned to India on January 9, 1915.

such a unique opportunity of placing my thoughts before the Gujarat public. I do not see anything wrong in these views being subjected to criticism, dissent and even emphatic protest. I would like them to be freely discussed. I will only say with regard to them that they were not formed today or yesterday. But they were formed years ago. I am enamoured of them, and my Indian experience of two years and a half has not altered them.

I congratulate the originators of the proposal to hold this conference as also those friends who have given practical shape to it. It is a most important event for Gujarat. It is possible for us to make it yield very valuable results. This conference is in the nature of a foundation, and if it is well and truly laid, we need have no anxiety as to the superstructure. Being in the nature of a foundation, it carries a heavy responsibility. I pray that God may bless us with wisdom and that our deliberations will benefit the people.

This is a political conference. Let us pause a moment over the word "political". It is, as a rule, used in a restricted sense, but I believe it is better to give it a wider meaning. If the work of such a conference were to be confined to a consideration of the relations between the rulers and the ruled, it would not only be incomplete, but we should even fail to have an adequate conception of those relations. For instance, the question of *mahwa* flowers[1] is of great importance for a part of Gujarat. If it is considered merely as a question between the Government and the people, it might have unhappy consequences or we might fail in our aim. If we considered the genesis of the law on *mahwa* flowers and also appreciated our duty as individuals in this matter, we would, very probably, succeed sooner in our fight with the Government than otherwise and easily discover the key to successful agitation. You will more clearly perceive my interpretation of the word "political" in the light of the views I shall place before you.

Conferences do not, as a rule, at the end of their deliberations, leave behind them an executive body, and even when such a body is appointed, it is, to use the language of the late Mr. Gokhale[2],

[1] Used for preparing a sort of country liquor

[2] Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915); Indian leader, patriot and politician; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and presided over its Benares session in 1905; founded the Servants of India Society at Poona to train men prepared to dedicate their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit; visited South Africa in 1912 at Gandhiji's invitation. *Vide* also Vol. II, pp. 377-8.

composed of men who are amateurs. What we need is men who would make it their business to give effect to the resolutions of such conferences. If such men come forward in great numbers, then and then only will such conferences be a credit to the country and produce lasting results. At present there is much waste of energy. It is desirable that there should be many institutions of the type of the Servants of India Society. Only when men, fired with the belief that service is the highest religion, come forward in great numbers, could we hope to see great results. Fortunately, India is richly endowed with the religious spirit, and if it is realized that in the present age service of the motherland is the best religion, religiously inclined men and women would take part in public life in larger numbers. When sages and saints take up this work, I believe India will achieve her cherished aims quite easily. At all events, it is incumbent on us that, for the purposes of this conference, we form an executive committee whose business it would be to enforce its resolutions.

The air in the country is thick with cries of swaraj. It is due to Mrs. Besant[1] that swaraj is on the lips of hundreds of thousands of men and women. What was unknown to most men and women only two years ago, has, by her consummate tact and her indefatigable efforts, become common property for them. There cannot be the slightest doubt that her name will take the first rank in history among those who inspired us with the hope that swaraj was attainable at no distant date. Swaraj was, and is, the goal of the Congress. The idea did not originate with her.[2] But the credit of presenting it to us as a goal realizable in the immediate future belongs to that lady alone. For that we could hardly thank her enough. By releasing her and her associates, Messrs Arundale[3] and Wadia[4], Government have laid us under an obligation, and at

[1] Annie Besant (1847-1933); British theosophist, orator and writer; founded the Theosophical Society in 1907; established the Indian Home Rule League in 1916; presided over the Indian National Congress in 1917; edited a daily, *New India*, and *The Commonweal*, a weekly; author of *The Religious Problem in India* and other books

[2] Gandhiji evidently had in mind, Dadabhai Naoroji who, in 1906, first used the word swaraj to define the goal of the Indian National Congress at its Calcutta Session; *vide* Vol. I, p. 384.

[3] G. S. Arundale was the head of the Society for the Promotion of National Education organized by Annie Besant. He took active part in the Home Rule movement and suffered internment.

[4] B. P. Wadia organized the Home Rule League and took active part in Home Rule movement.

the same time acknowledged the just and reasonable nature of the agitation for swaraj.[1] It is to be wished that the Government extend the same generosity towards our brothers, Mahomed Ali[2] and Shaukat Ali[3]. It is not necessary to inquire how much of what Sir William Vincent[4] has said about them needs to be looked into. It is to be hoped that the Government will accede to the people's desire for their release and leave it to them to see that no untoward results follow. This will place the people under a still greater obligation. The act of generosity will be incomplete so long as these brothers are not released. The grant of freedom to the brothers will gladden the people's hearts and endear the Government to them.[5]

Mr. Montagu will shortly be in our midst. The work of taking signatures to the petition[6] to be submitted to him is going on apace. The chief object of this petition is to educate the people about swaraj. To say that literacy is essential for achieving swaraj betrays ignorance of history. It is not necessary for the purpose of inculcating among people the idea that we ought to manage our own affairs. What is essential is the idea, the desire itself. Hundreds of unlettered kings have ruled kingdoms with great success. To see how far such an idea exists in the minds of the people and to try to create it where it is absent is the object of this petition. It is desirable that millions of men and women should sign it with the fullest understanding of what it means. That such a largely signed petition will naturally have its due weight with Mr. Montagu is its natural result.

[1] Mrs. Besant and her associates had been interned at Coimbatore and Ootacamand on June 15, 1917. They were released on September 16 in pursuance of the new British policy embodied in the Montagu declaration of August 20.

[2] Editor of *The Comrade*, an English weekly; was imprisoned, soon after the out-break of World War, for publishing an article entitled "Evacuate Egypt"; along with his brother, he was interned in October 1914; attended the second Round Table Conference in London

[3] Editor of *Hamdard*, suffered internment along with his younger brother, Mahomed Ali

[4] Sir William Henry Hoare Vincent; distinguished Indian Civil Servant; Member of the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India, 1917; Member of the India Council, 1923-31

[5] The Ali brothers were finally released on December 25, 1919, under the amnesty granted by the Royal Proclamation.

[6] The reference is to the Home-Rule Petition; *vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 528-9. A memorandum was also presented by a joint Congress-League deputation to Montagu and Lord Chelmsford on November 26; *vide* Appendix I.

No one has the right to alter the scheme of reforms[1] approved by the Congress and the Moslem League, and one need not, therefore, go into the merits thereof. For our present purposes, we have to understand thoroughly the scheme formulated most thoughtfully by our leaders and, putting our faith in them, do whatever is necessary to get it implemented.

This scheme is not swaraj, but is a great step towards swaraj. Some English critics tell us that we are not fit to enjoy swaraj, because the class that demands it is incapable of defending India. "Is the defence of India to rest with the British alone?" they ask, "and are the reins of Government to be in the hands of the Indians?" Now this is a question which is both amusing and painful. It is amusing because our British friends fancy that they are not of us, whilst our plan of swaraj is based upon retention of the British connection. We do not want the Englishmen who have settled here to leave this country. They will be our partners in swaraj. And they will have nothing to complain about if, in such a scheme, the burden of the defence of the country falls on them. They are, however, hasty in assuming that we shall not do our share of defending the country. When India decides to acquire military strength, she will attain it in no time. We have but to harden our feelings to be able to strike. To cultivate a hardened feeling does not take ages. It grows like weeds. The question is painful, because it puts us in mind of the fact that the Government have up to now debarred us from military training. Had they been so minded, they would have had at their disposal today, from among the educated classes, quite a large army. Government have to accept a larger measure of blame than the educated classes for the latter having taken little part in the War. Had the Government policy been shaped differently from the very beginning, they would have today an unconquerable army. But let no one be blamed for the present situation. At the time the British rule was established, it was considered a wise policy for the governance of crores of men to deprive them of arms and military training. But it is never too late to mend, and both the rulers and the ruled must immediately repair the omission.

[1] This scheme of political reforms was originally drawn up and published, towards the end of 1916, by 19 members of the Imperial Legislative Council. Briefly, it sought to subordinate the Executive to the Legislature. The scheme came up for discussion at the sessions of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League at Lucknow in December 1916. Elaborated and revised, the scheme, as accepted by both bodies in the wake of the Lucknow Pact, provided for the creation of a non-official majority in the Legislative Councils. *Vide* Appendix II.

In offering these views I have assumed the propriety of the current trend of thought. To me, however, it does not appear to be tending altogether in the right direction. Our agitation is based on the Western model. The swaraj we desire is of a Western type. As a result of it, India will have to enter into competition with the Western nations. Many believe that there is no escape from this. I do not think so. I cannot forget that India is not Europe, India is not Japan, India is not China. The divine word that "India alone is the land of *karma*[1], the rest is the land of *bhoga* (enjoyment)," is indelibly imprinted on my mind. I feel that India's mission is different from that of other countries. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the *tapascharya* that this country has voluntarily gone through. India has little use for steel weapons; it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute force. The terrible war going on in Europe furnishes an irrefutable proof of this. India can conquer all by soul-force. History supplies numerous instances to prove that brute force is nothing before soul-force. Poets have sung of this and men of wisdom have said so. A thirty-year-old youth behaves like a lamb before his eighty-year-old father. This is an instance of love-force. Love is *atman*[2]: it is the very property of *atman*. If we have faith enough, we can wield that force over the whole world. Religion having lost its hold on us, we are without an anchor to keep us firm amidst the storm of modern civilization, and are, therefore, being tossed to and fro. I shall return to this idea at a later stage.

These views of mine notwithstanding, I have joined the swaraj movement, for India is being governed at present under a modern system. The Government themselves believe that the "Parliament" is the best form of that system. Without such a parliament, we should have neither the modern nor the ancient form. Mrs. Besant is only too true when she says that we shall soon be facing a hunger-strike, if we do not have Home Rule. I do not want to go into statistics. The evidence of my eyes is enough for me. Poverty in India is deepening day by day. No other result is possible. A country that exports its raw produce and imports it back as finished goods, a country which, though growing its own cotton, has to pay crores of rupees to outsiders for its cloth, cannot be otherwise than poor. A country, in which it is considered extravagance to

[1] Action in pursuance of one's duty

[2] The self unidentifiable with any aspect of human individuality, the soul

spend on marriages, etc., can only be described as poor. It must be a terribly poor country that cannot afford to spend enough in carrying out improvements for stamping out epidemics like the plague. In a country whose officials spend most of their earnings outside, the people are bound to grow poorer day by day. What are we to say of the poverty of a country whose people, during cold weather, burn their precious manure for want of woollen clothing in order to warm themselves? Throughout my wanderings in India I have rarely seen a face exuding strength and joy. The middle classes are groaning under the weight of awful distress. The lowest orders have nothing but the earth below and the sky above. They do not know a bright day. It is pure fiction to say that India's riches are buried underground, or are to be found in her ornaments. What there is of such riches is of no consequence. The nation's expenditure has increased, not so its income. Government have not deliberately brought about this state of things. I believe that their intentions are sincere. It is their honest opinion that the nation's prosperity is daily growing. Their faith in their Blue-books is immovable. It is only too true that statistics can be made to prove anything. The economists deduce India's prosperity from statistics. People like me who follow rough and ready ways of reckoning shake their heads over Blue-book statistics. If the gods were to come down and testify otherwise, I would insist on saying that I see India growing poorer.

What then would our Parliament do if we had one? When we have it, we would have a right to commit blunders and to correct them. In the early stages we are bound to make blunders. But, we, being children of the soil, won't lose time in setting ourselves right. We shall, therefore, soon find out remedies against poverty. Then our existence won't be dependent on Lancashire goods. Then we shall not be found spending untold riches on building Imperial Delhi. It will, then, be in keeping with the cottages of India. There will be some proportion observed between that cottage and our Parliament House. *The nation today is in a helpless condition; it does not possess even the right to err. He who has no right to err can never go forward.* The history of the Commons is a history of blunders. Man, says an Arabian proverb, is error personified. *The freedom to err and the power to correct errors is one definition of swaraj.* Having a parliament means such swaraj.

We ought to have Parliament this very day. We are quite fit for it. We shall, therefore, get it on demand. It rests with us to define "this very day".

Swaraj is not to be attained through an appeal to the British democracy, the British people. They cannot appreciate such an appeal. Its reply will be: "We never sought outside help to obtain swaraj. We achieved it with our own strength. You have not received it because you do not deserve it. When you do, nobody can withohold it from you."

How then shall we fit ourselves for it? We have to demand swaraj from our own people. Our appeal must be to them. When the peasantry of India understands what swaraj is, the demand will become irresistible.

The late Sir W. W. Hunter[1] said that, in the British system, victory on the battle-field was the shortest way to one's goal. If educated India had, silently, taken its full share in the present War, I am certain that we would not only have reached our goal already, but the manner of it would have been altogether unique.

We often refer to the fact that many sepoys of Hindustan have lost their lives on the battle-fields of France and Mesopotamia. The educated classes cannot claim the credit for this. They were not sent out by us, nor did they join up through patriotism. They know nothing of swaraj. At the end of the War they will not ask for it. They have gone to demonstrate that they are faithful to the salt they eat. In asking for swaraj, I feel that it is not possible for us to bring into account their services. The only thing we can say is that we are not to blame for not being able to take a big part in the prosecution of the War.

That we have been loyal at a time of stress is no test of fitness for swaraj. Loyalty is no merit. It is a necessity of national existence all the world over. That loyalty can be no passport to swaraj is a self-demonstrated maxim.

Our fitness lies in that we now keenly desire swaraj, and in our clearly realizing that bureaucracy, although it has served India with best intentions, has had its day. And this kind of fitness is sufficient for our purpose. Without swaraj there is now no possibility of peace in India.

But if we confine our activities for advancing swaraj only to holding meetings, the nation is likely to suffer harm. Meetings and speeches have their own place and time. *But they cannot make a nation.*

[1] Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900); Indian administrator and member of British Committee of the Indian National Congress; *vide* Vol. I, pp. 381-2, Vol. VI, pp. 244-5 and Vol. IX, p. 328.

In a nation fired with the zeal for swaraj, we should observe an awakening in all departments of life. The first step to swaraj lies in the individual. The great truth, "As with the individual, so with the Universe," is applicable here as elsewhere. If we are ever torn by conflict from within, if we are ever going astray, and if instead of ruling our passions we allow them to rule us, swaraj can have no meaning for us. Government of self, then, is the first step.

Then the family. If dissensions reign supreme in our families, if brothers fight among themselves, if members of a family cannot live together, if joint families, i.e., families enjoying self-government, become divided through family quarrels, how can we be considered fit for swaraj?

Now for caste. If caste-fellows become jealous of one another, if the castes cannot manage their affairs in an orderly manner, if the elders claim especial importance, if the members become self-opinionated and thus show their unfitness for self-government in this limited sphere, how can they be fit for national government?

After caste, the city. If we cannot regulate the affairs of our cities, if our streets are not kept clean, if our homes are dilapidated and if our roads are crooked, if we cannot command the services of selfless citizens for civic government, and those who are in charge of affairs are neglectful or selfish, how shall we claim larger powers?

The way to national life lies through the cities. It is, therefore, necessary to linger a little longer on this subject. The plague has found a home in India.[1] Cholera has been always with us. Malaria takes an annual toll of thousands. The plague has been driven out from every other part of the world. Glasgow stamped it out the moment it made its appearance there. In Johannesburg it could appear but once.[2] Its municipality made a great effort and stamped it out within a month, whereas we are able to do nothing about it. We cannot blame the Government for this state of things. To tell the truth, we cannot even blame it on our poverty. None can stand in our way in any remedies that we may wish to adopt. Ahmedabad, for instance, cannot evade responsibility by pleading poverty. I am afraid that in regard to the plague, we must shoulder the entire responsibility. It is very

[1] Plague appeared in a serious form in 1917 and, between July of that year and June 1918, accounted for over 8,00,000 deaths.

[2] In 1904; *vide* Vol. IV, pp. 152-7 and Vol. V, pp. 109-10.

significant that when the plague is working havoc in our rural quarters, cantonments as a rule remain free. The reasons are obvious. In the cantonments the air is pure, houses detached, roads are wide and clean and the sanitary habits of the residents wholesome, whereas ours are as unhygienic as they well could be. Our closets are as filthy as hell. In a country in which ninety per cent of the population go barefoot, people spit anywhere and perform natural functions anywhere and we are obliged to walk on roads and paths thus dirtied. It is no wonder that the plague has found a home in our midst.

Unless we alter the conditions in our cities, rid ourselves of our dirty habits and have improved latrines, swaraj can have no value for us.

It will not be out of place here to refer to another matter. We regard men who render us most useful service, *Bhangis*, as untouchables. The result has been that we let them clean only a part of our closets. In the name of religion, we ourselves would not clean the places for fear of pollution and so, despite our reputation for personal cleanliness, a portion of our houses remains the dirtiest in the world, with the result that we grow up in an air which is laden with disease germs. We were safe so long as we kept to our villages. But in the cities we are ever committing suicide by reason of our insanitary habits.

Where large numbers suffer living death, it is very likely that people know neither true religion nor right action and conduct. I believe that it ought not to be beyond us to banish the plague from India, and if we can do so, we shall have so increased our fitness for swaraj, as it cannot be by any agitation, howsoever powerful. This is a question meriting the serious consideration of our doctors and *vaidyas*[1].

Not far from here is the holy centre of pilgrimage, Dakor. I have visited it. Its unholiness is limitless. I consider myself a devout *Vaishnava*[2]. I claim, therefore, a special privilege of criticising the condition of Dakorji. The insanitation of that place is so great that one used to hygienic conditions can hardly bear to pass even twenty-four hours there. The pilgrims pollute the tank and the streets as they choose. The keepers of the shrine quarrel among themselves and, to add insult to injury, a receiver has been appointed to take charge of the jewellery and costly robes

[1] Physicians practising *Ayurveda*, an indigenous system of medicine

[2] Devotee of Vishnu, one of the Hindu Trinity, and His incarnation, Krishna; a follower of the *bhakti* or devotional cult

of the idol. It is our clear duty to set matters right. How shall we, Gujaratis, out to have swaraj, fare as soldiers in the army fighting for it, if we cannot put our own house in order?

To think of the state of education in our cities also fills us with despair. It is plainly our duty by our own effort to provide education to the masses. But our gaze is fixed upon Government, whilst thousands of children go without education.

In the cities the drink-evil is on the increase, tea-shops are multiplying, gambling is rampant. If we cannot remedy these evils, how can we attain swaraj? Swaraj means managing our own affairs.

We are approaching a time when we and our children may have to go without milk altogether. Dairies, here in Gujarat, are doing us infinite harm. They buy out practically the whole milk-supply and produce butter, cheese, etc., for sale. How can a nation whose nourishment is chiefly derived from milk permit itself to be deprived of this important article of food? How can men be so selfish as to be heedless of the national health and think of enriching themselves through commercial exploitation of an article of diet? Milk and its products are of such paramount value to the nation that they deserve to be controlled by the municipalities. What are we doing about them?

I have just returned from the scene of *Bakr-i-Id* riots. For a trivial cause, the two communities fell out with each other, mischievous men joined in the fray and a mere spark became a blaze. We found ourselves helpless. We have been obliged to depend entirely upon Government assistance. This shows how crippled we are.

It will not be inopportune to dwell for a moment on the question of cow-protection. It is an important question. And yet it is left to be solved by cow-protection societies. Protecting the cows seems to be an ancient practice. It originated in the special needs of this country. Protection of its cows is incumbent upon a country 90 per cent. of whose population lives upon agriculture and needs bullocks for it. In such a country, even meat-eaters should abstain from beef-eating. These natural causes should be enough justification for not killing cows. But here we have to face a peculiar situation. The chief meaning of cow-protection seems to be to prevent cows from falling into the hands of our Muslim brethren and being used as food. The rulers need beef. On their account thousands of cows are slaughtered daily. We do nothing to prevent this slaughter. We hardly make any attempt to prevent the cruel torture of cows by certain Hindus of Calcutta, who sub-

ject them to a practice known as "blowing" and make them yield the last drop of milk. In Gujarat, Hindu cart-drivers use sharp goads to drive bullocks. We say nothing about this. The condition of bullocks in our cities is pitiable. Indeed, protection of the cow and her progeny is a very great problem. By making it a pretext for quarrelling with the Muslims, we have only ensured greater slaughter of cows. It is not religion, but want of it, to kill a Muslim brother in order to save a cow. I feel sure that if we were to discuss the matter with our Muslim brethren in the spirit of love, they also would appreciate the peculiar condition of India and readily co-operate with us in the protection of cows. By courtesy and through satyagraha, we can bring them to join that mission. But, in order to be able to do this, we shall have to understand the question in its true bearing. Instead of killing our brethren, we should be ready to die ourselves. But we shall be able to do this only when we understand the real value of the cow and have pure love for her. Success in this will ensure several things simultaneously. Hindus and Muslims will live in peace, the cow will be safe, milk and its products will be available in a pure condition and will be cheaper than now, and our bullocks will become the envy of the world. If our *tapascharya* is pure, we shall succeed in stopping slaughter of cows, whether by the British, Muslims or Hindus. Even this one achievement will bring swaraj nearer.

Many of these issues arise out of civic government. We can clearly see from this that our running the Government of India is dependent upon our upright management of civic affairs.

It will not be incorrect to say that practically there is no swadeshi movement in the country. We do not realize that this movement almost holds the key to swaraj. If we have no regard for our own language, if we feel aversion to cloth made in our country, if our dress repels us, if we are ashamed to wear the sacred *shikha*[1], if our food is distasteful to us, even our climate is not good enough, our people uncouth and unfit for our company, our civilization ugly and the foreign attractive, in short, if everything native is bad and everything foreign pleasing to us, I do not know what swaraj can mean for us. If everything foreign is to be adopted, surely it will be necessary for us to continue long under foreign tutelage, for so far foreign ways have touched the masses but little. It seems to me that, before we can appreciate swaraj, we should have not only

[1] Tuft of hair at the back of the head kept by orthodox Hindus

love but passion for swadeshi. Every act of ours should bear the swadeshi stamp. Swaraj can only be built upon the assumption that most of what is national is, on the whole, sound. If the view here put forth be correct, we should have a big movement in our country for swadeshi. Every country that has carried on a movement for swaraj has fully appreciated the swadeshi spirit. Scottish Highlanders hold on to their kilts even at the risk of their lives. We humorously call them the "petticoat brigade". But the whole world testifies to the strength that lies behind that "petticoat" and the Highlanders of Scotland will not abandon it, even though it is an inconvenient dress, and an easy target for the enemy. I don't wish to suggest that we should treasure our faults, but that what is national, even though not rich in excellences, should be adhered to, and that what is foreign should be avoided though one may succeed well enough in adopting it. That which is wanting in our civilization can be supplied by proper effort on our part. I do hope that the swadeshi spirit will possess every member in this assembly; if they all take the vow of swadeshi and observe it in the face of any difficulty or inconvenience, swaraj will be easy of attainment.

The foregoing illustrations go to show that our movement should be twofold. We may petition the Government, we may agitate in the Imperial Council for our rights; but for a real awakening of the people, the more important thing is activities directed inwards. There is a possibility of hypocrisy and selfishness tainting activities directed outwards. There is very much less danger of this in activities of the other kind. Not only will the former not be justified unless balanced by the latter, they may even be barren of results. It is not my contention that we have no activities at all directed inward, but I submit that we do not lay enough stress upon them.

One sometimes hears it said, "Let us get the government of India in our own hands; everything will be all right afterwards." There could be no greater superstition than this. No nation has gained its independence in this manner. The splendour of the spring is reflected in every tree, the whole earth is then filled with the freshness of youth. Similarly, when the spring of swaraj is on us, a stranger suddenly arriving in our midst will observe the freshness of youth in every walk of life and find servants of the people engaged, each according to his own abilities, in all manner of public activities.

If we admit that our progress has not been what it might have been, we should also admit two reasons for this. We have kept

our women away from these activities of ours and have thus become victims of a kind of paralysis. The nation walks with one leg only. All its work appears to be only half or incompletely done. Moreover, the educated section, having received its education through a foreign tongue, has become enervated and is unable to give the nation the benefit of such ability as it acquires. I need not reiterate my views on this subject, as I have elaborated them in my address[1] at the Gujarat Educational Conference. It is a wise decision, that of conducting the proceedings of this conference in Gujarati, and I hope that nothing will induce the people of Gujarat to change it.

The educated class, lovers of swaraj, must freely mix with the masses. We dare not turn away from a single section of the community or disown any. We shall make progress only if we carry all with us. Had the educated class identified itself with the masses, *Bakr-i-Id* riots would have been an impossibility.

Before coming to the last topic, it remains for me to refer to certain events as a matter of duty and to make one or two suggestions.

Every year the god of death exacts his toll from among our leaders. I do not intend to mention the victims claimed by this god all over India during the last 12 months. But it is impossible to omit reference to the sage-like Grand Old Man[2] of India. Who am I to estimate the value of his services to the country? I am no more than one who sat at his feet. I paid my respects to him when I went to London as a mere lad. I came to revere him from the very moment I waited upon him with a letter of introduction.[3] Dadabhai's flawless and uninterrupted service to the country, his impartiality, his spotless character, will aways furnish India with an ideal to follow. May God give him peace! May He grant his family and the Nation the ability to bear the loss. We can immortalize him by making his character our own, by copying his manner of service and by enthroning him for ever in our hearts. May the great soul of Dadabhai watch over our deliberations!

It is our duty to express our thanks to His Excellency the Viceroy for having announced the decision of the Government of India to abolish the customs levy on the border [between Saurashtra and British Indian territory] at Viramgam. This step should have

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Second Gujarat Educational Conference", 20-10-1917.

[2] Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917); *vide* Vol. I, p. 384.

[3] Gandhiji sought his counsel and help during his public life in South Africa. *Vide An Autobiography*, Part I, Ch. XXV.

been taken earlier. The people were groaning under the weight of this impost. It cost large numbers their trade. It has caused much suffering to many women. The decision does not seem to have been brought into effect. It is to be hoped that it will soon be.

I have submitted through the Press my experiences about the hardships of third-class railway passengers.[1] They are, indeed, past endurance. The people of India are docile and trained in silent suffering. Thousands, therefore, put up with the hardships, but they remain unredressed. There is, indeed, merit in such suffering, but it must have its limits. Submission out of weakness is unmanliness. That we tamely put up with the hardships of railway travelling is a sign of our unmanliness. These hardships are of two kinds, those which are due to the remissness of railway administration and those occasioned by the carelessness of the travelling public. The remedies are also, therefore, twofold. Where the railway administration is to blame, complaints should be addressed to it by everyone who suffers. This may be done even in Gujarati. The matter should be ventilated in the Press. Secondly, where the public are to blame, the wiser among passengers should inculcate manners upon their ignorant companions and enlighten them on their carelessness and dirty habits. This will require volunteers. Everyone can do his share according to his ability, and leaders might, in order to appreciate the difficulties of third-class travelling, resort to it from time to time without making themselves known and bring their unhappy experiences to the notice of the administration. If these remedies are adopted, we should, in a short time, see great changes.

A committee had been appointed in London to consider certain measures about the supply of indentured labour to Fiji and the other sister islands. The views of that committee have been officially published and the Government of India have invited the opinion of the public upon them. I need not dwell at length upon the matter as I have submitted my views already through the Press. I have given it as my opinion that the recommendations of the committee, if adopted, will result in a kind of indenture. We can, therefore, only come to one conclusion. We do not want to see labourers emigrating under bondage in any shape or form. There is no need for such emigration. The only thing required is a complete repeal of the law of indenture. It is no part of our duty to look to the convenience of the Colonies.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 547-51.

I come now to the last subject. There are two methods of attaining one's goal. Satyagraha[1] and *duragraha*[2]. In our scriptures, they have been described, respectively, as divine and devilish modes of action. In satyagraha, there is always unflinching adherence to truth. It is never to be forsaken on any account. Even for the sake of one's country, it does not permit resort to falsehood. It proceeds on the assumption of the ultimate triumph of truth. A satyagrahi does not abandon his path, even though at times it seems impenetrable and beset with difficulties and dangers, and a slight departure from that straight path may appear full of promise. Even in these circumstances, his faith shines resplendent like the midday sun and he does not despond. With truth for sword, he needs neither a steel sword nor gun-powder. Even an inveterate enemy he conquers by the force of the soul, which is love. Love for a friend is not put to the test. There is nothing surprising in a friend loving a friend; there is no merit in it and it costs no effort. When love is bestowed on the so-called enemy, it is tested, it becomes a virtue and requires an effort, and hence it is an act of manliness and real bravery. We can cultivate such an attitude even towards the Government and, doing so, we shall be able to appreciate their beneficial activities and, as for their errors, rather than feel bitter on their account, point them out in love and so get them rectified. Love does not act through fear. Weakness there certainly cannot be. A coward is incapable of bearing love, it is the prerogative of the brave. Looking at everything with love, we shall not regard the Government with suspicion, nor believe that all their actions are inspired with bad motives. And our examination of their actions, being directed by love, will be unerring and is bound, therefore, to carry conviction with them.

Love can fight; often, it is obliged to. In the intoxication of power, man fails to see his error. When that happens, a satyagrahi does not sit still. He suffers. He disobeys the ruler's orders and his laws in a civil manner, and willingly submits to the penalties of such disobedience, for instance, imprisonment and gallows. Thus is the soul disciplined. In this, one never finds that one's time has been wasted and, if it is subsequently realized that such respectful disobedience was an error, the consequences are suffered merely

[1] Literally, "holding to truth", pursuit of a right cause, a method of political agitation which found expression later in successive civil disobedience campaigns in India.

[2] Pursuit of a wrong cause or in a manner unworthy of the cause

by the satyagrahi and his co-workers. In the event, no bitterness develops between the satyagrahi and those in power; the latter, on the contrary, willingly yield to him. *They discover that they cannot command the satyagrahi's obedience. They cannot make him do anything against his will. And this is the consummation of swaraj, because it means complete independence.* It need not be assumed that such resistance is possible only against civilized rulers. Even a heart of flint will melt in the fire kindled by the power of the soul. Even a Nero becomes a lamb when he faces love. This is no exaggeration. It is as true as an algebraic equation. This satyagraha is India's distinctive weapon. It has had others but satyagraha has been in greater use. It is an unfailing source of strength, and is capable of being used at all times and under all circumstances. It requires no stamp of approval from the Congress or any other body. He who knows its power cannot but use it. Even as the eyelashes automatically protect the eyes, so does satyagraha, when kindled, automatically protect the freedom of the soul.

But *duragraha* is a force with the opposite attributes. As we saw earlier, the terrible War going on in Europe is a case in point. Why should a nation's cause be considered right and another's wrong because it overpowers the latter by sheer brute force? The strong are often seen preying upon the weak. The wrongness of the latter's cause is not to be inferred from their defeat in a trial of brute strength, nor is the rightness of the strong to be inferred from their success in such a trial. The wielder of brute force does not scruple about the means to be used. He does not question the propriety of means, if he can somehow achieve his purpose. This is not dharma but the opposite of it. In dharma, there can be no room for even a particle of untruth or cruelty, and no injury to life. The measure of dharma is love, compassion, truth. Heaven itself, if attained through sacrifice of these, is to be despised. *Swaraj is useless at the sacrifice of truth.* Such swaraj will ultimately ruin the people. The man who follows the path of *duragraha* becomes impatient and wants to kill the so-called enemy. There can be but one result of this. Hatred increases. The defeated party vows vengeance and simply bides its time. The spirit of revenge thus descends from father to son. It is much to be wished that India never gives predominance to this spirit of *duragraha*. If the members of this assembly deliberately accept satyagraha and chalk out its programme accordingly, they will reach their goal all the more easily for doing so. They may have to face disappointment in the initial stages. They may not see results for a time. But satyagraha will triumph in the end. The *duragrahi*, like the oilman's

ox, moves in a circle. His movement is only motion but it is not progress. The satyagrahi is ever moving forward.

A superficial critic of my views may find some contradiction in them. On the one hand, I appeal to the Government to give military training to the people. On the other, I put satyagraha on the pedestal. Surely, there can be no room for the use of arms in satyagraha? Of course there is none. But military training is intended for those who do not believe in satyagraha. That the whole of India will ever accept satyagraha is beyond my imagination. A cowardly refusal to defend the nation, or the weak, is ever to be shunned. In order to protect an innocent woman from the brutal designs of a man, we ought to offer ourselves a willing sacrifice and by the force of love conquer the brute in the man. Lacking such strength, we should employ all our physical strength to frustrate those designs. The satyagrahi and the *duragrahi* are both warriors. The latter, bereft of his arms, acknowledges defeat, the former never. He does not depend upon the perishable body and its weapons, but he fights on with the strength of the unconquerable and immortal *atman*. Anyone who is neither of the two is not a man, for he does not recognize the *atman*. If he did, he would not take fright and run away from danger. Like a miser his wealth, he tries to save his body and loses all; such a one does not know how to die. But the armoured soldier always has death by him as a companion. There is hope of his becoming one day a satyagrahi. The right thing to hope from India is that this great and holy Aryan land will ever give the predominant place to the divine force and employ the weapon of satyagraha, that it will never accept the supremacy of armed strength. India will never respect the principle of might being right. She will ever reserve her allegiance to the principle: "Truth alone triumphs."

On reflection, we find that we can employ satyagraha even for social reform. We can rid ourselves of the many defects of our caste system. We can resolve Hindu-Muslim differences and can solve political problems. It is all right that, for the sake of convenience, we speak of these things as separate subjects. But it should never be forgotten that they are all closely inter-related. It is not true to say that neither religion nor social reform has anything to do with politics. The result obtained by bringing religion into play in the field of politics will be different from that obtained otherwise. When thinking of political matters, we cannot ignore 56,000 ignorant sadhus living as wandering mendicants. Our Muslim brethren cannot lose sight of their fakirs. Nor can we be unmindful of the condition of our widows and the custom of child marriage and the

Muslims of the custom of purdah. The two communities cannot, likewise, shut their eyes to scores of questions that arise between them.

Indeed, our difficulties are Himalayan. But we have equally potent means at our disposal for overcoming them. We are children of an ancient nation. We have witnessed the burial of civilizations: those of Rome, Greece and Egypt. Our civilization abides even as the ocean in spite of its ebbs and flows. We have all we need to keep ourselves independent. We have great mountains and rivers. We have the matchless beauty of nature, and the sons and daughters of this land have handed down to us a heritage of deeds of valour. This country is the treasure-house of *tapascharya*. In this country alone do people belonging to different religions live together in amity and the gods of all are venerated. If, despite all this bounty, we fail to work a miracle, bring peace to the world and conquer the British through the play of moral force in our life, we shall have disgraced our heritage. The English nation is full of adventure, the religious spirit guides it, it has unquenchable faith in itself, it is a nation of great soldiers, it treasures its independence; but it has given the place of honour to its commercial instinct, it has not always narrowly examined the means adopted for seeking wealth. It worships modern civilization. The ancient ideals have lost their hold upon it. If, therefore, instead of imitating that nation, we cherish our past and sincerely value our strength, trust firmly in its supremacy, we shall know how to take the best advantage of our connection with the British and so make it profitable to us, to them and to the entire world. I pray to the Almighty that this assembly may play its part in this great work and thereby shed lustre upon itself, upon Gujarat, and upon the whole of India.

[From Gujarati]

Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti

14. RESOLUTIONS AT GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE—I[1]

November 4, 1917

1. This Conference places on record its grief at the demise of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, and offers its condolences to the members of his family. It prays to God that the soul of the Mahatma may rest in peace.
2. This Conference places on record its grief at the demise of Mr. Abdul Rasool, a prominent leader of the All-India Muslim League and the Congress, and offers its condolences to the members of his family. It prays to God for the welfare of his soul.
3. The itinerary of Mr. Montagu's tour provides for a stay in Bombay from December 24, 1917, to January 2, 1918, but the leaders of the Province will be in Calcutta during the week, attending sessions of the Congress and the Muslim League there and will therefore be denied the opportunity of joining in the discussions with Mr. Montagu. This Conference therefore requests the Government to arrange for Mr. Montagu to spend that week in Calcutta instead of in Bombay.
4 This Conference earnestly appeals to the various Congress Committees, the branches of the Home Rule League and other political bodies in Gujarat to work incessantly for the scheme of swaraj adopted by the Congress and the Muslim League and urges Gujaratis to secure as many signatures as possible to the petition[2] to Mr. Montagu which is in circulation for the purpose.

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 11-11-1917

[1] These were proposed from the Chair and were presumably drafted by Gandhiji.

[2] The reference is to the Home Rule petition drafted by Gandhiji and presented to Montagu; *vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 528-9. An identical petition was presented on behalf of the people of Bihar and Orissa.

15. SPEECH AT GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE—II

[GODHRA,]
November 4, 1917

Before commencing the proceedings, Gandhiji announced the Government's decision to lift the customs levy at Viramgam:

The matter of the customs levy at Viramgam had been under correspondence and I wrote to inquire when it would be removed. I am glad to tell you that it is to be removed and that the Government Resolution on the subject will be published in the next issue of the *Gazette*.

On Mr. Jinnah[1] moving in Gujarati, the resolution on the Congress-League Scheme for Reforms[2], Gandhiji thanked him, saying:

Mr. Jinnah has laid me under an obligation by agreeing to my suggestion. He is at present a member of the Imperial Legislative Council. But, at no distant date, he will have to approach Hindus and Muslims, *Ghanchis*[3], *Golas*[4] and others not knowing English, for votes. He should, therefore, learn Gujarati if he does not know it.

On Lokamanya B. G. Tilak rising to address the meeting, the question arose in what language he should speak. Gandhiji remarked:

You want to have swaraj; you should then show respect to the man whom you have elected to conduct the meeting. Mr. Tilak understands, but he cannot speak Gujarati. He will only speak

[1] Mahomed Ali Jinnah (1879-1948); barrister and statesman; first Governor-General of Pakistan, of which he was virtually the founder.

[2] The following brief report appeared in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6-11-1917: "Gandhiji, before he called upon Mr. M. A. Jinnah to move the resolution expressing gratefulness of the Conference at the forthcoming visit of Mr. Montagu and praying for the grant of the Congress-Muslim League scheme of reforms as the first instalment of the policy recently announced by the Secretary of State, made a few remarks in which he explained the reasons why he left the reading of the resolution to the mover himself and exhorted him to speak in Gujarati.

"Later, Gandhiji moved from the chair a resolution urging Mr. Montagu to cancel his visit to Bombay at a time when every leader of note would be absent from the city and praying that he might attend the Congress-Muslim League sittings at Calcutta."

[3] & [4] Names of educationally backward communities

in his mother tongue[1]. Though he is advanced in years, it would be but proper if he engages a Gujarati teacher and picks up the language. We belong to the Bombay Presidency and should, therefore, learn both languages in order that we might know what the people feel. Queen Victoria learned Urdu.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 11-11-1917

16. SPEECH AT GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE—III[2]

November 5, 1917

I am sorry that some of the speakers were not allowed to complete their very fine speeches, and I apologize to them for this. Those who have had to suppress their enthusiasm may show it in other ways. I must leave this very day, denying myself the love of the people of Godhra. I would have had some peace if I had stayed on for a while. These days, however, when a fire is raging, how can one expect peace? The songs were sweet to hear, but they are not the end of the matter. I hope what was sung would be acted upon. If you follow up the songs with sacrifices in the cause of the nation, the hopes[3] expressed by Mr. Talati will be fulfilled. Take the pledge, if you think you can, to achieve swaraj within 12 months. We saw, during the Conference, what the mother tongue can do. Our language is in the position of a widow with no one to look after her. Mr. Khaparde[4] and others pointed out the virtues of the mother tongue. Mr. Tilak's speech yesterday was followed by about 75 per cent. of the audience. A foreign language may be as beautiful as gold, but it can be of little use to us. Our own language may be mere straw, but it is for us to turn it into gold.

Of the resolutions passed, five relate to matters which we can get settled in a year's time. As for the resolution on forced labour,

[1] Marathi

[2] This was Gandhiji's concluding speech. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7-11-1917, reported that "in dissolving the Conference, Mr. Gandhi, in a short speech, exhorted them to continue their propagandist work and to take signatures in the petition to Mr. Montagu."

[3] These were that the first conference after the attainment of swaraj would be held at Nadiad, in Gujarat.

[4] G. S. Khaparde, a leader from Berar, supporter of Bal Gangadhar Tilak

if the Executive Committee does not get such labour abolished in that time, the members should resign. If, again, they do not succeed in securing improvement in the condition of students, they may as well go about with bangles on their wrists. Of course, it will be no great honour to men to do this. We have to strive to secure the release of Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali. The chair of the Muslim League President should not remain vacant.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 11-11-1917

17. RESOLUTIONS AT GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE—II[1]

November 5, 1917

5. This Conference tenders its thanks to His Excellency the Viceroy for the decision he has announced to remove the levy, known as Viramgam customs, on certain categories of goods on their entry from Kathiawad into British territory, and earnestly requests him to give immediate effect to the decision.

6. Farmers without adequate means are put to extreme hardships because of the general practice of collecting revenue dues in one instalment instead of two and are obliged to sell their means of livelihood to pay the dues. This Conference therefore requests the Government to see that revenue dues are always collected in two instalments and to fix the time for the collection of instalments with due regard to the crop situation.

7. This Conference is of the view that the Sub-divisional Officer of every district should have his residence, during the monsoon months, in the principal town of his division instead of at the district headquarters. For some time past, the office of the District Deputy Collector of Dohad is shifted to Godhra during the monsoon months and this results in considerable hardship to the people of Zalod, Bhimdi, etc., and also puts them to heavy expense on transport. This Conference therefore requests the Government that the said office should remain in Dohad as in former years.

8. This Conference requests the Government of India to release all Indians, men and women, who had been detained for political reasons under the Defence of India Act and declares its view that the desire expressed by His Excellency the Viceroy to see peace

[1] These were moved on the third day of the Conference, and were presumably drafted by Gandhiji.

prevail in India during Mr. Montagu's visit here will be better realized if the detenus are released.

9. In revenue matters as also for the maintenance of peace and order in his district, the Collector is at present dependent on the one-sided reports of the Mamlatdar and the police and this often leads to serious errors in the administration of the district and injustice to the people. This Conference therefore recommends to the Government that it appoint an advisory board of elected members for each district.

10. Recently, some persons have set up, in disregard of the interests of the people, plants for the processing of milk and the Government has also been doing the same, with the result that people have to go without the nourishing items of milk and ghee in their food. This Conference therefore suggests to the Government that such plants be closed forthwith.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 11-11-1917

18. SPEECH AT SOCIAL CONFERENCE, GODHRA[2]

November 5, 1917

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

We are in the midst of those people, call them *Dheds*, *Bhangis*, *Antyajas*[3], or by whatever appellation you like. Beside me there are lawyers and doctors, I believe, and other gentlemen; we have today joined hands with the so-called backward classes; now we are sure to get swaraj. (Hear, hear.) We, Hindus and Muhammadans, have become one; here we are in association with this *Dhed* community. Do not suppose that that community belongs to a lower status; let the fusion take place between you and that community, and then you will be fit for swaraj. We lost the right to

[1] A pamphlet, dated November 5, 1917 and printed at Godhra, gives a longer version of this resolution which, however, is not likely to have been drafted by Gandhiji. Besides, the version reproduced here is corroborated by *Mumbai Samachar*, 8-11-1917.

[2] At the instance of advanced classes assembled for the Gujarat Political Conference, the *Dhed* community held a meeting. Presiding over the meeting, Gandhiji spoke in Gujarati. Abbas Tyabji, Vithalbhai J. Patel, Ratansey Dharamsey, Morarji Gokaldas and others attended.

[3] Name of a low-caste community; etymologically, last-born, lowest on the social scale, the "untouchables"

swaraj before, because we committed a sin before God in treating this community with such neglect. Why should we hesitate to touch the *Antyajas*? It is not mentioned in any religious book that this community should not be touched, or treated as we are doing now. It is a fallacy to give that community the lowest place in the scale of castes. Where the union of hearts takes place, there, I am sure, God is present. God is omnipotent, though some of us do not believe it. Therefore, we quarrel among ourselves. Where is the difference between us and this community? There is the same heart, the same nose, the same tongue, the same feeling—everything the same. (Cheers.) Where there is a divided heart, there Ramachandra cannot be. There is no *Imam*. (Laughter.) I do not know whether God was present at the political conference (Laughter.), but I am sure he is here. (Hear, hear.) I have not come here to make a long speech; I came to set an object lesson. (Hear, hear.) This lesson on social reform is not to be had elsewhere. (Cheers.) Here is a vast assemblage. It is like an ocean. Anyone can use this water for cooking his rice. (Laughter.) Let everyone speak. I now call upon the Hon'ble Mr. Patel to speak. (Loud cheers.)

A young *Dhed* then asked permission to speak. He came forward very nervously. He said that he was not an educated man. He was the son of a *Dhed*. He thanked the assembly on behalf of his community and tendered their tribute of love and gratitude to the Bawaji (Mr. Patel). He gradually grew more confident and endeavoured to substantiate the claim of his community to be among the foremost ranks of the Rajput race.

Mr. Gandhi rose at once to disillusion him of this, and advised him not to believe in such cock-and-bull stories regarding his ancestry. He admonished the *Dheds* to be content with their parentage and to rise by their own efforts, now that the higher classes had lent them a kindly hand.

Other speakers followed—all striving to console and encourage *Dhed* community. . . .

In his final speech Mr. Gandhi asked the upper classes to convert their theoretical sympathy for the *Dheds* into practical one and to subscribe towards opening and maintaining a school for *Dhed* children. Rs. 1,653 were subscribed on the spot.[1]

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1917

[1] Gandhiji and others were then garlanded and the meeting dissolved amid shouts of *Gandhiji-ki-jai*.

19. SPEECH AT "ANTYAJ" CONFERENCE, GODHRA

November 5, 1917

I would say to the gentleman[1], on whom I lean for support as I stand, that, if he is a saint within as he is in the outer garb, we shall have swaraj all the sooner for that. If he carries on the fight in the Legislative Council dressed like a sadhu, as now, our desire will be fulfilled earlier. To my *Antyaj* brethren, I say this: today, you are sitting in the midst of Hindus and Muslims. Hinduism certainly does not say that contact with those who serve us is sinful. Despite this crowd, no one has so much as felt his leg squeezed. God is there where there is such perfect silence. I don't believe the Political Conference or the Social Conference succeeded in proving that God exists everywhere, but here He is certainly present. Where there are hypocrisy, falsehood, inequality and the notion that certain persons may not be touched, Vishnu, Khuda or Rasool cannot be present.

Speaking again later, Gandhiji requested Smt. Gangabehn[2] to take *Antyajas* under her care and teach them to read and write.

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 11-11-1917

20. A STAIN ON INDIA'S FOREHEAD

[GODHRA,
After *November 5, 1917*]

That the untouchables are a separate class is a blot on India's forehead. The caste system is a hindrance, not a sin. But untouchability is a sin, a great crime, and if Hinduism does not destroy this serpent while there is yet time, it will be devoured by it. The untouchables must not be considered as falling outside Hinduism. They should be treated as respectable members of Hindu society and should be assigned their *varnas* according to their vocations.

[1] Vithalbhai J. Patel, who later became the first elected Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. He appeared in the garb of a sannyasi at the meeting.

[2] An inmate of Sabarmati Ashram who was later responsible for introducing the popular form of *charkha*, the spinning-wheel.

The *varna* system, as I have defined and described it, is not practised by Hinduism today. Those who call themselves Brahmins have given up the pursuit of learning. They have taken to various other occupations. The same is true more or less of the other *varnas*. As a matter of fact, owing to our subjection to foreign rule, we are all slaves and are, in the eyes of the Westerners, untouchables lower even than the Sudras.

Why does God permit this atrocity? Ravana was a *rakshasa*, but this *rakshasi*[1] of untouchability is even more terrible than Ravana. And when we worship this *rakshasi* in the name of religion, the gravity of our sins is further increased. Even the slavery of the Negroes is better than this. This religion, if it can be called such, stinks in my nostrils. This certainly cannot be the Hindu religion. It was through the Hindu religion that I learnt to respect Christianity and Islam. How then can this sin be a part of the Hindu religion? But then what is to be done?

I shall put up a lone fight, if need be, against this hypocrisy. Alone I shall undergo penance and die with His name on my lips. It is possible that I may go mad and say that I was mistaken in my views on the question of untouchability, that I was guilty of a sin in calling untouchability a sin of Hinduism. Then you should take it that I am frightened, that I cannot face the challenge and that I change my views out of cowardice. You should take it, in that event, that I am in delirium.

In my humble opinion, the dirt that soils the scavenger is physical and can be easily removed. But there are those who have become soiled with untruth and hypocrisy, and this dirt is so subtle that it is very difficult to remove it. If there are any untouchables, they are the people who are filled with untruth and hypocrisy.[2]

There has been a lot of comment in *Gujarati* on the convention of *Bhangis*, *Doms* and other untouchables that was held in the Mahar compound of Godhra. The writers of these comments have given completely distorted versions of the events at the convention and misled the readers. I therefore write the following lines to put things right.

In matters concerning religion, I consider myself not a child but an adult with 35 years of experience. For I have thought

[1] Female-demon

[2] The paragraphs that follow were substantially embodied by Gandhiji in a letter which he addressed to *Gujarati* in connection with certain comments in that paper on the *Antyaj* Conference in Godhra on November 5. The letter was published in its issue of 30-12-1917.

and reflected on the question of religion for as many years. Especially, wherever I saw truth, I translated it into action. It is my conviction that mere perusal of the shastras does not lead to an awareness of the true spirit of religion. We see that without following a code of rules, without the study of the shastras, a man's behaviour tends to be wayward. For the meaning of a doctrine I shall not go to a man who has studied the shastras with the desire to be called a pundit. For this reason, for formulating my code of ethics I shall not seek the assistance of the books written after laborious study by such scholars as Max Muller. Nowadays lots of people who profess themselves knowledgeable in the shastras are found to be ignorant and conceited. I seek a guru. That a guru is needed I accept. But, as long as I have not come upon a worthy guru, I shall continue to be my own guru. The path is arduous certainly, but in this sinful age, it seems to be the right one. Hinduism is so great and so wide in sweep that no one has so far succeeded in defining it. I was born in the *Vaishnava* sect and I dearly love its *siddhas*[1] and *siddhantas*[2]. Nowhere, either in Vaishnavism or in Hinduism, have I seen it laid down that *Bhangis*, *Doms*, etc., are untouchables.[3] Hinduism is hemmed in by many old customs. Some of them are praiseworthy but the rest are to be condemned. The custom of untouchability is, of course, to be condemned altogether. It is because of it that, now for two thousand years, Hinduism has been burdened with a load of sin in the name of religion. I call such orthodoxy hypocrisy. You will have to free yourself of this hypocrisy; the penance for it you are already undergoing. It is no good quoting verses from *Manusmriti* and other scriptures in defence of this orthodoxy. A number of verses in these scriptures are apocryphal, a number of them are quite meaningless. Then again, I have not so far come across any Hindu who obeys or wants to obey every injunction contained in *Manusmriti*. And it is easy to prove that one who does this will, in the end, be himself polluted. The *Sanatana Dharma* will not be saved by defending every verse printed in the scriptures. It will be saved only by putting into action the principles enunciated in them—principles that are eternal. All the religious leaders with whom I have had occasion to discuss the matter have agreed in this. All the preachers who are counted among the learned and who are revered in society

[1] The enlightened or perfect ones

[2] Principles, established truths

[3] Here the letter in *Gujarati* has: "According to Akha, the prejudice against such contact is like a superfluous limb."

have clearly announced that our treatment of *Bhangis*, *Doms*, etc., has no sanction other than the custom to which it conforms. To be truthful, no one really follows this custom. We touch them in the trains. They are employed in mills where we touch them without the least compunction. Untouchables have found admission in the Fergusson and the Baroda Colleges. Society puts no hindrance so far as these matters are concerned. In English and Muslim homes they are politely welcomed. And we have no hesitation in touching Englishmen and Muslims; in fact, we feel a pride in shaking hands with many of these. When these same untouchables are converted to Christianity, we dare not treat them as untouchables. Thus, it is impossible for a thoughtful Hindu, even if he feels differently in the matter, to uphold a tradition which it is not possible to follow.

I can think of no epithet to describe those who deny the feeling of hatred which underlines untouchability. If a *Bhangi* by mistake finds his way into our compartment, he will hardly escape a beating and, as for abuse, this will fall on him in a shower. The tea-seller will not hand him tea nor the shopkeeper sell him goods. We will not care to touch him even if he be dying. We give him our leavings to eat and our torn and soiled garments to wear. No Hindu is willing to teach him. He cannot dwell in a proper house. On the road, out of fear of our wrath, he has to proclaim his untouchability repeatedly. What treatment can be more indicative of hatred than this? What does this condition of his show? Just as in Europe, at one time, slavery was upheld under cover of religion, so now in our society hatred for the untouchables is fostered in the name of religion. Till the very end there were some people in Europe who quoted the Bible in defence of slavery. I include our present supporters of orthodoxy in this category. We shall have to free religion of the sin of untouchability which is imputed to it. Unless we do this, diseases like plague, cholera, etc., cannot be rooted out. There is nothing lowly in the occupations of the untouchables. Doctors as well as our mothers perform similar duties. It may be argued that they cleanse themselves afterwards. Yes, but if *Bhangis*, etc., do not do so, the fault is wholly ours and not theirs. It is clear that the moment we begin lovingly to hug them, they will begin to learn to be clean.

Unlike the movement for inter-dining, this movement does not need to be pushed. This movement will not cause the system of *Varnashram* to disappear. It aims at saving it by doing away with its excesses. It is also not the desire of the initiators of this movement that *Bhangis*, etc., should give up their vocations. They only

want to demonstrate that the function of removing garbage and filth is a necessary and sacred function and its performance can impart grace even to a *Vaishnava*. Those who pursue this vocation are not, therefore, degraded but entitled to an equal measure of social privileges with those pursuing other callings; their work protects the country from a number of diseases. They, therefore, deserve the same respect as doctors.

While this country is venerated for its *tapasya*, purity, compassion and other virtues, it is also a play ground of licence, sin, barbarity and other vices. At such a juncture it will be becoming for our fraternity of writers to gird up their loins to oppose and root out hypocrisy. I appeal to you to share in the sacred work that was taken up at Godhra greeting it as such and participate in the effort that may be undertaken in this cause, so that sixty million people may not break away from us in despair.

Before joining this campaign, I have thoroughly reflected on my religious responsibility. A critic has made the prophecy that, in course of time, my views will change.[1] On this I shall only say that, before such a time comes, I shall have forsaken not only Hinduism but all religion. But it is my firm conviction that if, in the attempt to free Hinduism of this blot, I have to lay down my life, it will be no great matter. It is altogether impossible for the feeling of untouchability to survive in a religion which produced devotees like Narsi Mehta who saw all men as equals.

[From Hindi]

Bapu aur Harijan

21. SPEECH AT MUZAFFARPUR[2]

November 11, 1917

FRIENDS,

I had intended to speak of three things only, but what I saw at the station has added one more. Wherever I go, our people, forgetting everything in their love, so rush at me and throw everything into such confusion that I grow weary of it all. This kind of behaviour makes things unpleasant and obstructs national work. If we wish to honour a public worker, there is a way of doing so

[1] In *Gujarati*, the example of Narmadashankar has been cited here.

[2] An indirect report, available from Bihar-Orissa Abstracts, 1917, recorded that five to seven thousand people attended the meeting.

and one should learn it. Our people do not even know how to maintain order as they stand on the station platform. We want to work for the nation. We have embarked on the service of Bharat. It is our duty then to learn how to behave in public, how to go about our work and how to honour public servants. We should learn drill for this purpose.

The second thing is about Champaran. The people there have secured what they wanted.[1] We had no quarrel with the indigo-planters; we only wanted to shake off our slavery to them and this is all we have been able to achieve. The orders issued for the benefit of the people there do not apply to Muzaffarpur; I believe, however, that they will be, by and by. If we fail to secure anything, it is merely because of want of trust between us and those from whom we seek it. When I started my work in Champaran, the indigo-planters and the officials there felt that I was out to fight them; when, ultimately, they realized that I had no such intention, that I only wanted the indigo-planters to be just to the people, there was little difficulty in getting what we wanted.

The work at Champaran is over, but something still more important remains. If a man who has shaken off slavery and gained his freedom is not properly educated, he may possibly abuse his freedom. The people of Champaran have secured local self-government of a sort. How it is to be used is the problem now. For this purpose my co-workers, Babu Brijkishore[2] and others, have jointly decided to open schools all over the place and educate the people in general knowledge, especially in the rules of hygiene. The intention is to give instruction in letters to boys and girls and teach them as much hygiene as they need to keep themselves clean and tidy, and teach adults how to safeguard public health and keep clean the roads, disused wells, latrines, etc. With this object, a school is to be opened in a place called Dhaka on the auspicious day of Tuesday. There is an urgent need of volunteers for this work. Any educated friends who so desire may come forward. Those who do will be examined and such of them as are found fit will be taken up.

[1] The Champaran satyagraha which Gandhiji led resulted in the removal of *tinkathia*, a levy on the indigo labourers; *vide* Vol. XIII.

[2] Brijkishore Prasad, leading lawyer of Darbhanga; staunch nationalist and close follower of Gandhiji with whom he worked in 1917 during the Agrarian Movement in Champaran; in 1920, gave up legal practice to join Non-Co-operation Movement

The third matter is this. What shall we do to bridge the gulf that exists between Hindus and Muslims and bring together hearts that have become estranged? It is my life's mission to bring about amity between the two communities. For 25 years I have been thinking how this may be done and have been mixing with Muslim friends. What I hear about Shahabad pierces my heart and makes it bleed.[1] If I could, I would have run up to the place and had a heart-to-heart talk with our Muslim brethren there. But I know my limitations. The Champaran matter is not yet out of the way and it is a principle of mine that one must live and die for the work on hand till it is brought to a successful issue. But I have been thinking about the problem, and should like to tell my Hindu brethren that we have grievously erred on this occasion, that we are more to blame. It is the duty of the wiser among the Hindus to heal the Muslims' wounds and compensate them for the losses we have inflicted on them in Arrah. I would even go to the extent of saying that, if Shahabad Hindus cannot do this, Hindus all over the country should combine to do it. The lawyer friends who have been fighting in the courts, on the two sides, should withdraw the cases and inform the Government that they do not now want them to be proceeded with. To Muslim friends, I shall say that the fighting between the two communities in one district need not be made an excuse for fighting all over India. Even two brothers sometimes fight, but they should not be allowed to disrupt the family as a whole. In like manner, the two communities here need not take their quarrel outside the Province. We must, as a matter of religious duty, help the Muslim League and the Congress to accomplish the task they have undertaken. Our leaders have bestowed full thought on what they are doing and we have, therefore, no right to obstruct their efforts. We are preparing ourselves for swaraj and, if we waste our time in fighting in this manner, our descendants will have cause to blame us. It is up to us to settle our differences, but we seem incapable of doing so. One reason for our fighting is that we receive our education through a foreign tongue. This has cost us our courage and our manhood. Besides, we have lost contact with the masses; there is a big gulf separating our educated class and the masses. With better relations between the educated and the rest, such unseemly fighting would be impossible.

[1] The reference is to the riots which had broken out there during September-October.

The differences between Hindus and Muslims are over the cow. If we want cows to be protected, the thing to do is to save them from slaughter-houses. Not less than 30,000 cows and calves are killed for the British every day. While we have not succeeded in stopping this slaughter, we have no right to raise our hand against Muslims. I should like to tell the Hindus that it is no religious act to kill Muslims in order to save cows. Hinduism prescribes only one way: that of *tapascharya*. To quote Tulsidasji, compassion is the root that sustains one in dharma; we should, accordingly, approach this work in the spirit of compassion. I also want cows to be protected but, for that purpose, I would ask the Muslim friends to apply the knife to my neck and kill me rather than the cow. I am sure they will respond to this prayerful request. If we cherish our own freedom, we have no right to deprive others of theirs. Interference with one another's freedom leads to strained relations. If a Muslim arrogantly asks Hindus not to play on drums [near a mosque], the latter will never agree. If, however, the Muslims were to say in all humility, "Please do not play on drums and disturb us in the performance of our religious duty, in our devotions; if you do, we will lay down our lives," I am sure there is no Hindu so thoughtless as to act against their wishes. The truth is that in this matter neither the Hindu nor the Muslim is being honest. If we want harmony, we can have it through love; never through intimidation, [for] the other party will not speak out frankly what it really feels.

I have been saying that there should be a single national language, and that this should be Hindi. This, I hear, has created some misunderstanding among Muslims. Some of them imagine that, in advocating Hindi, I ignore the claims of Urdu. By Hindi I mean the language spoken by Hindus and Muslims in North India and written in Nagari and Urdu scripts. I am in no way ill-disposed to the Urdu language. In my view, the two languages are one; they have a common structure and idiom, except for the difference in respect of the use of Sanskrit and Persian words. I bear English no grudge, but it will not help us to mix with the masses and work among them like one of themselves. This is all I mean. Whether you speak of Hindustani or Hindi, to me they mean the same. It is our duty to carry on national work through Hindi. As for the script, no harm will be done if the Hindu boy uses the Nagari and the Muslim boy uses the Urdu; on the contrary, each will have learnt both the scripts. Among ourselves, we should hear only Hindi words, not English. Not only this;

our councils, too, should resound with debates in Hindi. I shall struggle all my life to bring this about.

I have but one thing more to say: all over India, we are agitating for swaraj. We have realized from the experience of the Shahabad riots why swaraj is being delayed. It will not come with petitions and speeches. If the Hindu is out to shed Muslim blood in order to save the cow, swaraj will never come. If harmony is restored between the two communities and they declare that they will themselves settle their differences and guarantee that there will be no need for third-party intervention, swaraj will be ours. It does not require spread of education; the only requisite is amity among us, and strength. We should cultivate fearlessness before we can achieve swaraj. While we have the spark of the Divine in us, never need we fear any human being.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti

22. *SPEECH AT OPENING OF GOKHALE LIBRARY, UMRETH*[2]

November 12, 1917

FRIENDS,

I have been invited to declare open this library, named after Gokhale, and to unveil his portrait. This is a sacred mission, and a solemn one. These days people in the West are obsessed with the idea that in founding a library one renders social service. An American city has a millionaire, Carnegie by name. He is

[1] The Bihar-Orissa Police Abstracts recorded that finally Gandhiji spoke about the Home Rule Movement and exhorted all to support the recommendations of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. He appealed to the audience to sign the petition prepared for presentation to Montagu, which he explained. Later that evening, Gandhiji attended a Conference of Hindu and Muslim leaders and took part in the discussion. According to a confidential report dated November 12, 1917, from the Superintendent of Police, Muzaffarpur, "Mr. Gandhi condemned the Shahabad disturbance and expressed his sorrow. . . .Mr. Gandhi said that it is not his intention that Hindi should be adopted and not Urdu. He said that foreign language should not be adopted and only a language be adopted which is understood by all. He said that Hindi and Urdu are mostly spoken and readily understood."

[2] In Gujarat

so rich that, even if he were to distribute rupees by the million among the people, his hoard of wealth would not be exhausted. He donates libraries at innumerable places, all named after him. Some Scottish leaders requested him not to import such a practice into their country against their wishes, for [they said] it was likely to do much more harm than good. In Paris, libraries are being increasingly misused. You need not understand from this that I am against libraries. When a library is being started, and before deciding to start it, one should consider after whom it is to be named and what kinds of books it should make available to the townspeople, so that the library may be [suitably] named and its books read to some purpose.

And now about the portrait. Not only was Gokhale not hungry for fame, he did not even like being honoured in public. Often, on such occasions, he would cast his eyes down. If you believe that, when his portrait is unveiled, his soul will rest in peace, you are mistaken. This great man, when dying, thus declared his cherished wish : "After I am dead, my biography will be written, my statues will be put up and condolence meetings will be held; all this will avail but little to bring peace to my soul. My only wish is that the whole of India live as I have lived and that the Servants of India Society which I have established prosper." They who are prepared to abide by this testament are entitled to unveil Gokhale's portrait.

Gokhale's was a life of extensive activities. Today, I shall relate some incidents in his domestic life for the benefit of the women assembled here. It is an example for them to follow, for Gokhale served his family very well. He never acted in a manner which would cause pain to anyone in the family. He refused to follow the current practice in Hindu society of marrying off a girl, doll-fashion, as soon as she reached the age of eight and so cast her away to sink in the sea. His daughter is still unmarried. He had to go through much in keeping her so. Moreover, he lost his wife while he was yet in the bloom of youth. He could have married again, but he did not. He served his family in many ways; ordinarily everyone does so. One may, however, serve one's family either out of self-interest or to advance the interests of the nation. Gokhale had renounced all considerations of self-interest. He did his duty by the family, and then the town and then the country, as occasion demanded, with an undaunted spirit, with perseverance and labour.

In Gokhale's mind there was not a trace of the feeling that Hindus and Muslims are different. He regarded all with an equal

eye and with affection. He would get angry sometimes, but the anger was provoked only by concern for national interests and it had invariably a wholesome effect on the other party. It even converted many Europeans who had been hostile into close friends.

Anyone who looks at Gokhale's life, the whole of it, will see that he had made it synonymous with national service. He left this world of sorrow before he was fifty, and the only reason for this is that all the twenty-four hours of the day he laboured indefatigably, using up his mental and physical energies in the service of the nation. Never did he allow the petty concern for himself and his family to enter his mind. The only thing that concerned him was what he could do for the country.

Gokhale, this high-souled man, was also daily exercised over the issue of the uplift of the *Antyaj* communities, who constitute a great source of strength for the country, and he laboured in many ways to raise them up. If anyone commented on this, he would reply plainly that contact with an *Antyaj* was no defilement, that, on the contrary, one committed a heinous sin by entertaining the evil prejudice against such contact.

When I went to see how the *Meghwad*[1] brethren here weave, I was surprised to hear the children accompanying me talk of defilement. While I don't wish to take up on this occasion the subject of caste, I shall certainly say that, unless we assimilate these classes, one can hope for no improvement in one's town or in the country. If you have any hopes for swaraj, you will be disappointed. So long as you have not shaken off unthinking faith, so long as dissensions continue in the home, the family, the town and society as a whole, so long will you shout in vain for swaraj. Formerly, there were 50 looms in Umreth and now only two remain, and even these are none too prosperous. The reason is to be sought in your narrow outlook. It is the duty of the leaders here that they develop the local industries and secure patronage for them. If they do not show such concern, they are not entitled to put up the portrait of a saint like Gokhale, dedicated to service of others. I don't think, however, that Umreth is altogether devoid of spirit. It is a matter of satisfaction that it has expressed regard for Mahatma Gokhale and has recognized his achievements.

[From Gujarati]

Dharmatma Gokhale

[1] A low-caste community

23. *NEWSPAPERS*

[Before *November 14, 1917*]

I promised the Editor a contribution for the *Diwali*[1] Number of *Hindustan.* I find that I have no time to make good the promise, but, thinking that I must write something, I place before the readers my views on newspapers. Under pressure of circumstances, I had to work in a newspaper office in South Africa and this gave me an opportunity to think on the subject. I have put into practice all the ideas which I venture to advance here.

In my humble opinion, it is wrong to use a newspaper as a means of earning a living. There are certain spheres of work which are of such consequence and have such bearing on public welfare that to undertake them for earning one's livelihood will defeat the primary aim behind them. When, further, a newspaper is treated as a means of making profits, the result is likely to be serious malpractices. It is not necessary to prove to those who have some experience of journalism that such malpractices do prevail on a large scale.

Newspapers are meant primarily to educate the people. They make the latter familiar with contemporary history. This is a work of no mean responsibility. It is a fact, however, that readers cannot always trust newspapers. Often, facts are found to be quite the opposite of what has been reported. If newspapers realized that it was their duty to educate the people, they could not but wait to check a report before publishing it. It is true that, often, they have to work under difficult conditions. They have to sift the true from the false in but a short time and can only guess at the truth. Even then, I am of opinion that it is better not to publish a report at all if it has not been found possible to verify it.

The reporting of speeches in Indian newspapers is generally defective. There are very few who can take down a speech verbatim, so that speeches are generally found to be a mere hotchpotch. The best thing to do would be to send the proofs of the reported speech to the speaker for correction and the paper should

[1] The Hindu festival of lights, celebrated at the end of the autumn harvest with ceremonial worship of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth. According to the Gujarati calendar, it is the last day of the year.

publish its own report of the speech only if the speaker does not correct anything in the proofs sent to him.

It is often observed that newspapers publish any matter that they have, just to fill in space. This practice is almost universal. It is so in the West, too. The reason is that most newspapers have their eye on profits. There is no doubt that newspapers have done great service. Their defects are therefore overlooked. But, to my mind, they have done no less harm. There are newspapers in the West which are so full of trash that it will be a sin even to touch them. Many, full of prejudices, create or increase ill will among people. At times, they produce bitterness and strife even between different families and communities. Thus, newspapers cannot escape criticism merely because they serve the people. On the whole, it would seem that the existence of newspapers promotes good and evil in equal measure.

It is now an established practice with newspapers to depend for revenues mainly on advertisements rather than on subscriptions. The result has been deplorable. The very newspaper which writes against the drink-evil publishes advertisements in praise of drink. In the same issue, we read of the harmful effects of tobacco as also from where to buy it. Or we shall find the same issue of a paper carrying a long advertisement for a certain play and denouncing that play as well. Medical advertisements are the largest source of revenue, though they have done, and are still doing, incalculable harm to the people. These medical advertisements almost wholly offset the services rendered by newspapers. I have been an eye-witness to the harm done by them. Many people are lured into buying harmful medicines. Many of these promote immorality. Such advertisements find a place even in papers run to further the cause of religion. This practice has come entirely from the West. No matter at what cost or effort, we must put an end to this undesirable practice or, at least, reform it. It is the duty of every newspaper to exercise some restraint in the matter of advertisements.

The last question to consider is : What is the duty of newspapers when laws like the Seditious Writings Act and the Defence of India Act are in force? We often find our papers guilty of equivocation. Some have perfected this method into a science. But, in my opinion, this harms the country. People become weak and equivocation becomes a habit with them. This changes the form of language : instead of being a medium for the expression of one's thoughts, it becomes a mask for concealing them. I am convinced that this is not the way to develop strength in the

people. The people, both collectively and individually, must cultivate the habit of speaking only what is in their minds. Newspapers are a good means of such education, for those who would evade these laws had better not bring out a paper at all; the other course is to ignore the laws in question and state one's real views fearlessly but respectfully and bear the consequences. Mr. Justice Stephen has said somewhere that a man who has no treason in his heart can speak no treason. If it is there in the heart, one should speak it out. If one does not have the courage for this, one should stop publishing a newspaper. This is in the best interests of all.

[From Gujarati]

Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti

24. *MESSAGE TO GUJARATI HINDU STRI MANDAL*[1]

[On or before *November 14, 1917*]

The women whom this message reaches are likely to have had some measure of education. I wish, therefore, to consider one thing. What should educated women do for their illiterate sisters? This is a very important issue. Beyond question, if women choose, they can attain a far greater measure of success in this field than men can ever do. At present, we do not find many women taking to this work. That is, I believe, not their fault but that of their education. The first thing, therefore, which educated women must do is to try and see that their sisters do not fall a victim to it. Modern education fails utterly to prepare women for their distinctive role; this is not questioned by anyone. I do not wish here to examine the shortcomings of modern education or to bother you with the question how they may be overcome. All that I desire is that educated women should make this question their own and that those of them with some experience should dedicate their all to rouse Gujarat over it and focus attention on the right lines [of reform].

Educated women have no contact with those not educated; often, they don't welcome such contacts. This disease must be cured. It is necessary that educated women are made conscious of their most obvious duty. Men also are not free from faults of this kind, but women need not follow in their footsteps. They have the power, denied to men, of creating new ideals and translating them into action. By comparison, man is thoughtless, impatient and given to the pursuit of novelty. Woman, it is observed, is serious-

[1] This was sent before the Gujarati New Year's Day.

minded, patient and inclined generally to cling to old ways. When, therefore, she has a new idea, it seems to have its birth in the tender depths of her heart. An idea born in this manner commands her unshakable faith and, for that reason, it is capable of being rapidly propagated. I believe therefore that, if educated women give up copying the ways of men and think independently about the important questions affecting their sex, we shall find it quite easy to solve many a knotty problem.

The problem of widows is not quite a simple one. It is a worthy cause to which quite a few women can dedicate their lives. It is one thing for a widow to marry again, if she so desires, quite another to waste one's time over persuading a child-widow to do so. If women were to resolve, instead, and induce others to resolve, not to marry a widower or offer one's daughter in marriage to one, and not to sacrifice one's daughter to a child bridegroom, fit enough to be rocked in a cradle, I am confident the fruits will be sweet for India. It is worth considering carefully in what way the country can avail itself of the services of hundreds of widows, young and old; if educated women will not think about this, who else should? I have had an idea for many years; I may as well mention it here. Only a few years ago, our women used to spin cotton, and even weave. Today, the art is about to disappear. India has had to suffer much because of its decline. Millions of rupees have been lost to foreign countries. At present, widows spend their time going to temples or in the service of those claiming to be holy men, or in idle gossip. It does not seem to me that one can live a religious life only by going to a temple, though, of course, I do not wish to suggest that thoughtful visits to a temple may not be profitable. The idea, however, that spending time in a temple, unmindful of other tasks, is the furthest limit of selflessness is sheer superstition. Likewise, to wait on men of holy life, who stand in no need of services from others, and to serve them in all manner of ways, is unwholesome for both parties and waste of one's time. To draw widows away from such activities and induce them to take up the task of serving India, work which will promote their ultimate good, is to help them to remarriage of the purest kind. Why do not the educated women embark upon this mission? Those of them who might think of doing so should themselves take the first lesson in the school of industry, namely, spin cotton and weave.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 2-12-1917

25. LETTER TO J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
November 14, 1917

DEAR MR. MERRIMAN[1],

I think that I ought to keep you informed of my doings. Having received an offer of a ready-made school building and an invitation to open a school in a Kham village, I opened one today in Barharva Lakhamsen near Daka. I have put there the best volunteer teachers from among those who have offered their assistance. They are Mr. and Mrs. Gokhalay from Bombay. They have their independent means, and Mrs. Gokhalay was doing educational work in Bombay. The nature of the work they will do I have already described to you. I am hoping, with the assistance, if possible, of the heads of the respective concerns, to open similar schools, one in the Peeprah *Dehat*[2] and another in the Tarkaulia *Dehat*, and I hope to open one in the Belwa *Dehat*. As this attempt is in the nature of an experiment, I do not want to open more than four or five schools, until some definite result is obtained. I hope that I shall have the co-operation of the local officials in an experiment which, I know, is full of difficulty, but which is fraught with important consequences if it becomes successful.[3]

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original signed by Gandhiji; also *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*

[1] District Magistrate, Champaran, Bihar

[2] Rural area

[3] To this Merriman replied on November 18 as follows: "I have to acknowledge your letter of 14-11-1917 instt. I am interested to hear of your attempt to found schools. I shall be glad to hear more about this, regarding the class of schools you propose to open, and the type of education to be imparted. Also the places where you open them." For Gandhiji's reply to this, *vide* "Letter to J. L. Merriman", 19-11-1917,

26. *LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI*

BETTIAH,
Diwali [*November 14, 1917*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I returned to Bettiah today and read your letters. This letter will be posted on the first[1].

Read the reply[2] to Thakorelal and send it on to his address.

It is enough if Nanubhai has been satisfied. We shall progress even through the mistakes we make. It will be much if we don't make the same mistake again. You may go out for as long as you wish. You would do well to pay a visit to Umreth as well. I take it that Chhaganlal is at Ahmedabad. I suppose none of you have any occasion to go to the town. Convey my humblest greetings to respected Khushalbhai[3] and Devabhabhi[4]. My blessings to you all for the New Year.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5706. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

27. *LETTER TO HARILAL GANDHI*

MOTIHARI,
November 14, 1917[5]

CHI. HARILAL,

Today is *Diwali* day. May the New Year bring you prosperity. I wish that all your aspirations are fulfilled and that all of you increase in your wealth of character, and pray that you

[1] The New Year's Day according to the Gujarati calendar, i.e., November 15

[2] This letter is not available.

[3] & [4] Parents of the addressee

[5] Mahadev Desai has quoted this letter in his *Diary* under "November 15", but *Diwali* was on November 14.

realize more and more that this is the only real Lakshmi and our highest good lies in the worship of this alone.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

28. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
New Year's Day, 1974 [November 15, 1917][1]

What shall I give you on this auspicious day? I am trying to give you what you, I and many others lack. If one has that, one has everything. Only he who has it can give it. If that is the truth, what can I give? However, we may strive for it together.[2]

> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
> And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
> And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
> Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
> Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.
> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a

[1] On this date Gandhiji appears to have communicated with J. T. Whitty, Manager of Bettiah Raj and, later, had an interview with him. Neither the correspondence nor an authorized report of the interview is available; but the gist of both along with Whitty's personal assessment of Gandhiji are available in a letter of his, dated November 17, 1917, addressed to L. F. Morshead, Commissioner of the Tirhut Division, *vide* Appendix III.

[2] What follows is reproduced from the original English source: *I Corinthians*, Ch. 13. Gandhiji had rendered it in Gujarati.

> child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.
>
> And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Read this, meditate on it and read it again. Read it in English and translate it into Hindi. Strain every nerve to have at least a brief glimpse of love. Mira[1] had felt the stab of this dagger of love, deep in her heart. If we could but get hold of this dagger and get also the strength to stab ourselves with it, we could shake the world. The thing is there in me, and yet I feel its lack every moment. There is much that is wanting. Sometimes, I behave like a half-filled pot. Only yesterday, I had no time to spare for people who wanted, in their love, to detain me. I felt sore over this all the time. This is no sign of love. That is just the way a half-filled pot spills over. May the New Year bring you prosperity. It is my wish, and my only blessing, that you may grow in your physical, mental and spiritual powers and dedicate them all, with love, to India.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

29. LETTER TO J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
November 17, 1917

DEAR MR. MERRIMAN,

I visited Koeri yesterday and met Shivratan[2] and other people. As, however, the result of the inquiry ordered by you is, I understand, to be announced to Shivratan on the 23rd instant, I postpone submitting my observations till the result is known.

Raiyats[3] from the Siraha *Dehat* inform me that thumb marks are being taken on some contracts by that factory. I am unable to advise them as to the action they should take until I see the draft. I have, therefore, told them that if they wish to follow my advice they ought not to sign any document until I have

[1] Saint-poetess of Mewar in Rajasthan; *vide* Vol. XII, pp. 425, 519 & 520.
[2] Shivratan Nonia
[3] The tenant-farmers

seen it, as I consider myself entirely unfit to give advice otherwise. I thought that I ought to pass this information on to you. I would like to add that it would tend to smoothness of relations between the landlords and the *raiyats* if the former showed you the contracts they wish to enter into with the *raiyats*. As you may be aware, it has been a frequent complaint on the part of the *raiyats* that they are often made or called upon to sign documents which they do not understand.[1]

I remain,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original signed by Gandhiji; also *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*

30. LETTER TO RANCHHODLAL PATWARI

MOTIHARI,
Kartak Sud 4 [*November 18, 1917*]

RESPECTED BHAISHRI,

Your letter brought the same calm to my mind that one from Kalabhai[2] would have done. I am all love and admiration for the Patwari family. I can never forget the help[3] you gave me at a critical moment. I have looked upon you as an elder brother. No one can say what way I would have gone if you had not helped me in Bombay.

I can make only one return : I can so live as to make you think that the help given to me was well deserved. I have a feeling that you are saddened after I have taken up my work for *Bhangis*. I could not, and I cannot, give up my work for *Bhangis*. But your being unhappy makes me sad and so, when I received your letter, I knew that, though you disapprove of my work for *Bhangis*, on the whole you don't disapprove of all my activities. This came to me as a blessing.

[1] Replying on November 18, Merriman wrote: "They are at liberty to go to the court if they think they have been victimized. I am quite unable to listen to any observations in a case which is before the courts, which might tend to prejudice the merit of the court. . . I am glad therefore that you do not intend to impart your observation to me regarding a case brought by Sheoratan Nonia."

[2] Lakshmidas Gandhi, Gandhiji's elder brother

[3] Patwari's father gave Gandhiji financial assistance for going to England for his legal studies in 1888; *vide* Vol. I, p. 11.

But I hope for more. In the name of *Vaishnava* dharma that most sacred dharma is being destroyed; in the name of cow protection, destruction of cows is brought about; in the name of religion, the most irreligious practices are prevalent; posing to be men of religion, irreligious people lay down the law on religious matters. If I can see these things, how is it that you, who cherish *Vaishnava* dharma, should not see them? I find myself constantly asking this question. Contact with a *Bhangi* can never be sinful ; killing a Muslim for [saving] cows can never be a righteous act ; the holy books can never have enjoined untruth; men who give free rein to their desires ought not to rule in matters of religion ; all this is axiomatic. How can there be any difference of opinion about this? Would you not like to use the influence you have acquired over the *Vaishnava* community towards this end? Can you not help men like me at least with your verbal support? What *tapascharya* can I go through to make you see things as I see them? I keep asking these questions. Please think [of them] inwardly again.

I send you [reports of] my speeches[1] and should like you to read them again from this point of view.

Though I may not be able just now to read the books you mention, please send them to me.

We have purchased, for the Ashram, 55 *bighas*[2] of land on the banks of the Sabarmati. Construction is proceeding, though the progress is slow because of the plague.

Respectful greetings from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 4124

31. LETTER TO J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
November 19, 1917

DEAR MR. MERRIMAN,

In the schools I am opening, children under the age of 12 only are admitted. The idea is to get hold of as many children as possible and to give them an all-round education, i.e., a knowledge

[1] It is not known what these were.
[2] A measure of land

of Hindi or Urdu and, through that medium, of Arithmetic, rudiments of History and Geography, a knowledge of simple scientific principles and some industrial training. No cut and dried syllabus has been yet prepared, because I am going along an unbeaten track. I look upon our own present system with horror and distrust. Instead of developing the moral and the mental faculties of the little children, it dwarfs them. In my experiment, whilst I shall draw upon what is good in it, I shall endeavour to avoid the defects of the present system. The chief thing aimed at is contact of the children with men and women of culture and unimpeachable moral character. That to me is education. Literary training is to be used merely as a means to that end. The industrial training is designed to give the boys and girls who may come to us, an additional means of livelihood. It is not intended that on completing their education, they should leave their hereditary occupation, viz., agriculture, but make use of the knowledge gained in the school to refine agriculture and agricultural life. Our teachers will also touch the lives of the grown-up people and, if at all possible, penetrate the *purdah*. Instructions will, therefore, be given to grown-up people in hygiene and about the advantages of joint action for the promotion of communal welfare, such as the making of village roads proper, the sinking of wells, etc. And as no school will be manned by teachers who are not men or women of good training, we propose to give free medical aid, so far as is possible. In Badharwa, for instance, Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhalay who is a trained nurse and midwife and who, assisted by her husband, is in charge of the school, has already dispensed castor oil and quinine to scores of patients during the four days that she has been at work and visited several female patients.

If you desire any further information, I shall be only too glad to supply you with it. My hope is that I shall be able to enlist in my work full co-operation of the local authority. I am opening another school tomorrow near Shrirampur, about two miles from Amolwa.

Regarding the *raiyats*' complaints about documents, evidently the point I wished to make was not made by me. I know that the *raiyats* can go to court about compulsion. The difficulty is that they are neither trained nor organized enough for orderly work. What is morally compulsion may not be compulsion in law. My experience of the Champaran *raiyat* is that he is extremely unintelligent and is easily made to assent mentally to any proposition. I hold, therefore, that the Government, as the guardian of such people, have to save them from their own ignorance. I

do not say that in the Saraiya case brought to your notice, any compulsion has been used. I simply suggested that, in order that there might be no allegation of compulsion after such documents as I have referred to in my previous letter are signed, you might, if you deemed it proper, inquire about the contracts now offered to the *raiyats* for their signatures.

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original signed by Gandhiji; also *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*

32. LETTER TO RAMNAVAMI PRASAD[1]

[MOTIHARI,
November 21, 1917][2]

BHAISHRI,

I shall leave this place at 10 a.m. on the 23rd.[3] Meet me on the train at Muzaffarpur. I shall then tell you about the petition. I see no harm in accepting the fees, if offered. Second school was opened yesterday.

Bandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 735

33. LETTER TO J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
November 22, 1917

DEAR MR. MERRIMAN,

I went over to Bhitiharva on Tuesday last and opened a school there. Mr. Soman, a public worker from Belgaum, and a B.A. LL.B., has been left in charge, and he will be assisted by Mr.

[1] A lawyer who gave up practice and assisted Gandhiji during his Champaran movement; organized non-co-operation movement in Muzaffarpur in 1919-22

[2] The second school referred to in the letter was opened at Bhitiharva, a village situated in the Nepal Tarai, on November 20, 1917.

[3] Gandhiji was due to meet Montagu in Delhi.

Balkrishna, a young man from Gujarat. Mrs. Gandhi will join them on the 24th. Her work will be chiefly confined to moving among the women.

I was in Badharwa yesterday, and Mrs. Gokhalay and my son were just returning from a visit to a dying man. They told me that the people in the District were woefully neglectful of the patients, and they believed that many preventible deaths must occur in the District for want of a simple observance of the rudimentary principles of hygiene. I know that this will not come to you as news, because it is not a peculiar condition of the District in which Mrs. Gokhalay is working, or of Champaran, but it is a chronic condition among the peasantry of India.

I simply mentioned the incidents in order that, as soon as I have advanced a little more in my experiment, I may enlist your active sympathy and help in a Department in which all can meet without reserve.

Dr. Dev[1], who is a qualified and experienced surgeon and physician, and Secretary of the Servants of India Society came on Tuesday. His services have been lent for this work by the Society. He has come with three more volunteers including a lady from Prof. Karwe's Widows' Home. Dr. Dev will chiefly supervise the Medical Branch of the work.

I may state that I shall be away from Champaran for over a fortnight. Babu Brijkishore Prasad will represent me in my absence.[2]

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original signed by Gandhiji; also *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*

[1] Dr. Hari Srikrishna Dev

[2] Merriman reported Gandhiji's activities, even his innocuous educational work, to L. F. Morshead, Commissioner of the Tirhut Division. The Bihar and Orissa Government was getting concerned and restive over the situation of agrarian unrest in the Champaran district. *Vide* Appendix IV.

34. LETTER TO CHANDULAL

MOTIHARI,
Kartak Sud 8 [*November 22, 1917*]

BHAISHRI CHANDULAL,

I have your letter. You have been keeping your vows well enough and they are good ones to take. It is my conviction that one cannot build one's character without the help of vows. They are to a man what anchor is to a ship. A ship without an anchor is tossed to and fro and finally broken on the rocks; without vows, human beings meet a similar fate. The vow of truth includes all others. How would a man who respects truth violate *brahmacharya* or steal anything? "*Brahma* alone is real; all else is non-existent." If this *sutra*[1] is true, knowledge of *Brahma* is implied in the observance of truth.

Non-violence and truth are convertible terms. This seems to be the idea behind the saying, "One must speak truth, truth that is agreeable."[2] That is genuine truth which causes no pain, for that alone is non-violent. Truth may sound harsh but it can never result in suffering. Our employment of truth may offend the other person, but his conscience will tell him that what was said about him was true and was said with the best of motives. We are here interpreting truth in its widest connotation. Truth does not mean merely being truthful in speech; the term "truth" means exactly the same thing as it does in the *sutra* about *Brahma* alone being true. The English word "truth" also carries the same meaning.

I remember to have told you that you are not made to work for women's education. I may be wrong, but I think it is quite a difficult task and I have not felt that you have the strength required for it. From my experience of you, I do not think that you can take up the work by yourself. All the same, if you are so much in love with it, by all means go on with it. I think Sharadabehn also will not be able to manage without you now. It may be just as well, therefore, if you do not give up that work.

I have not noticed much physical energy in you. You need to spend, in the Ashram or elsewhere, two or three months in purely

[1] An aphorism

[2] An old Sanskrit saying runs: सत्यं ब्रूयात्प्रियं ब्रूयान्न ब्रूयात्सत्यमप्रियम् । प्रियं च नानृतं ब्रूयादेष धर्मः सनातनः ॥

physical work, as much of it as your body can stand—from cleaning food grains to digging pits. This will give you fresh mental energy. Your slowness in work will disappear. The eyes, hands, legs, etc., need to be exercised. I have noticed that you lack energy.

I have read Nandlal Kisan's letter. We shall have a talk about what we can do in the Indian States. You will meet me in Bombay, or in Ahmedabad at any rate, in December.

If you have faith in yourself, you will be able to do much in your family circle. It is for the son to bring round the mother. A mother loves her son so much that she even submits to his wishes. It will be a crime for you not to spare enough time for your daughters.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 3258

35. SPEECH AT ALIGARH[1]

November 28, 1917

. . . He gave his hearers to understand that the plea of benefit to the community would be of no avail to procure Home Rule unless unity prevailed among them. In referring to the Arrah riots, he expressed contempt of the contemptible and detestable barbarism exhibited by the Hindus. It was for the Hindus to mend this gap. Hindu-Mohammedan quarrels should be settled like those of [a] private family. He made many references to the Ali brothers. . . .

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1917

[1] On his arrival, Gandhiji was met by a large number of students at the railway station and taken in a procession to the Lyall Library Grounds where he spoke to about 2,000 people on Hindu-Muslim unity. One of the students garlanded Gandhiji in the name of Home Rule. *The Leader*, 1-12-1917, reported that, in his speech, Gandhiji "referred to Sir Syed Ahmed's saying that Hindus and Mahomedans were like the two eyes of the motherland."

36. SPEECH AT ALIGARH COLLEGE[1]

November 28, 1917

. . . He said that he had hoped to visit the college in the company of the Ali brothers. He had seen Aligarh working for the nation and the country, but the Mohammedans were not so absorbed in endeavouring to uplift their country as their brothers—the Hindus were. He would like to see some, if not all, of the College students nation uplifters, such as Mr. Gokhale was. He made a reference to his dress (white *kurta,* dhoti and topi) and said that it was the only suitable dress for Indians; the depressed classes would listen to and consult persons dressed in the garb of ancient India more readily than they would those dressed in modern clothes. . . .

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1917

37. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI[2]

[Before *November 30, 1917*]

. . . Both of them have an excessively heavy burden on them. There may be one difference between you and me. Whatever little happiness I get is from the practice of self-control. Without the discipline of self-control, I just cannot live. Whenever I lose it, I feel pained. When I lose temper with Ba, I give myself condign punishment for doing so. At Godhra, I replied rather rudely to one of the delegates. I was satisfied only when I had apologized to him in public.

I shall have to be in Calcutta on the 30th of November and so, most probably, I shall be in Ahmedabad quite early.[3] However, I shall get only two days there. Perhaps, I may not be able to go to Ahmedabad after all. I shall spare no effort, though.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5707. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] After his address at the library grounds, *vide* the preceding item, Gandhiji spoke to the students on "Truth and Thrift", with the permission of Reynell, acting Principal of the College. Later, he went to Khwaja Abdul Majid's house and from there to the station and left for Calcutta.

[2] The first three pages of the letter are not available.

[3] Gandhiji was in Ahmedabad on December 4 and 5.

NADIAD,
December 6, 1917

HOW TO PREVENT IT?

1. If one's blood is pure, it has the power of destroying the germs of every type of disease.

2. If, therefore, we maintain our body in a healthy state, thanks to the pure blood, it will remain well protected even in an epidemic of contagious disease.

3. For maintaining purity of blood, one must eat simple food, in limited quantity and at fixed hours. Any diet containing excessive fat or sugar, or cooked with spices, must be avoided. One must eat nothing for at least three hours before bed time. Air too is food. One should not, therefore, sleep except in a house with proper windows and doors, and these should be kept open. Nor should one sleep with one's face entirely covered with the sheet. If the head feels cold, one may wear a cap, but the face should always be left uncovered. If the mouth is kept closed and air inhaled only through the nostrils, there is no risk of one's feeling cold. Water, too, must be clean. It is an excellent practice always to drink water that has been boiled and strained through thick cloth. The latter should be carefully washed every day. And so, also, the inside of the water-pot should be properly cleaned every day. Every man or woman should have as much exercise daily as may be got by walking for two hours.

4. Even a person who does all this and keeps healthy may have his blood affected if the home and its surroundings are not clean. The doors and windows, the ceiling, the floor, the staircase—in short, every part of the house—should be kept perfectly clean. For this purpose, such part of the house as can be washed should be washed properly and then allowed to dry. Cobwebs, dust, straw and rubbish of every description should every day be carefully swept out of the house. It should be ensured that no part of the house remains wet. Carpets and floor-coverings should be daily taken up [for dusting] and not left in their place day after day. Doctors say that the plague spreads through fleas. In a well-swept house with plenty of air and light, fleas will hardly ever enter.

They say, too, that the disease spreads through rats. One should, therefore, examine all the corners of the floor and the entire plastering and see that there are no holes anywhere. This can be done easily enough, and at no expense. It is because of our laziness that rats make their holes in our houses. Keeping a cat in the house will prevent it from being so infested.

5. But the most important cause of illness in India is the defective and extremely harmful methods we follow for answering calls of nature. A large number of people do this in the open. The excreta are not covered over with earth or otherwise, and this leads to the breeding of millions of flies every day. They come into contact, first, with excreta and then with our body, food and clothes. Several kinds of poisonous gases are generated by the excreta all the time and these pollute the air all round. It is obvious that when air, which is men's best food, is being thus continually polluted, they cannot maintain good health. The filth in our latrines is equally or even more harmful. For it is in our very homes. If, therefore, we go out into the open, after defecating we must cover the excreta with earth as people in other countries do. Latrines should have arrangements for dry dust to be sprinkled in sufficient quantity every time after use. The excreta should be collected in some sort of a bucket. The refuse-pit should be avoided altogether and all conduits should be closed up. Urine and water should also be collected in the bucket. If we did not cherish false notions in the name of religion, we would never tolerate such hellish filth. The latrine should be so constructed as to permit the scavenger access to every part of it. Unless these improvements are carried out, cities in India will never be free from infectious diseases.

6. The air gets polluted also by reason of people urinating or spitting or throwing litter and other rubbish anywhere on the roads. Doctors have discovered that germs spread even from the spittle of certain categories of patients, of tuberculous patients for instance, and infect others. We must certainly consider what we do and where. Millions of people in this country walk bare-foot. It is a sorry state of affairs that they have to walk on filth. Our roads, our streets or the verandahs of our houses should be so clean that one would not hesitate to sit down or even sleep on them.

We would do well to do some careful thinking why it is that, in cities with an English population, the English localities are unaffected even when an epidemic of the plague is raging. The reason is nothing else than the cleanliness of the place.

Maintaining cleanliness requires no money but merely intelligent care.

Treatment

7. The plague will never spread to cities where these rules are carefully observed. Let us now consider what should be done when it has actually broken out. Whenever a case of plague is detected, one must search out rats and, if one finds any dead ones, they must be removed with a pair of tongs to a distant place and burnt with the help of hay or kerosene or buried in a deep pit far away from human habitation. The place where a dead rat is found should be covered with live ashes and whitewashed, the room emptied of everything, swept clean and fumigated with *neem* leaves. If the walls permit of being whitewashed, they should be. If there are any rat holes, they should be opened up to make sure that there are no dead rats inside and then filled in. Any holes elsewhere in the house should be treated in the same manner. The doors and windows should be kept open and plenty of light and heat let in; if the roofs are covered with country tiles, they should also be removed so as to let in air and light. Having cleaned up the house in this manner, we should leave it empty and, if possible, live in tents or huts put up in the open. We should avoid contact with other people in the town and even when shopping be careful not to touch the shopkeeper. If in this way immediate remedial measures are taken, the plague will not spread further. It will not affect other families in the same town or neighbouring towns through the families which have already been affected. If, after 31 days outside, one finds that the infection has not spread elsewhere or that no dead rats are found in the unoccupied house, the family can return to it.

8. In any town where a case of the plague has occurred, the other families should immediately inspect their own houses. They should remove the household things outside and look for rats. If they find any dead ones, they should leave the house and go to live outside as advised above. Even if no dead rats are found, the house should be thoroughly swept and kept very clean afterwards. It should be whitewashed. If there are no arrangements for ventilation, the necessary structural improvements should be carried out. Measures should also be adopted to maintain the utmost cleanliness in the surroundings. If the neighbours' houses are not clean, it should be seen to it that they are cleaned.

9. Nothing should be done to put the patient into a fright. No one except the person nursing him should be allowed to go near him. He should be kept only in a room with plenty of air and light. If there is a public hospital, he should be removed there. All food should be discontinued. If he has had no food for three hours at the time the symptoms of the plague are detected, he should be immediately given an enema. He should be placed in a tub, filled with cold water, for two minutes or, if he prefers, for five minutes so that his legs and chest remain out of water, and the portion from the knees to the hips under water. If he feels thirsty, he may be given as much as he needs of water that has been boiled, cooled, and filtered. Apart from this, he should have nothing to eat, or even to drink. If the head feels very hot, a mud poultice or a wet sheet pack should be applied to it. Very likely, these measures will suffice to secure the patient against the risk of death. If he survives the next day and if he feels hungry, he may be given lime juice or orange juice to drink, mixed with boiling water or cold water. When the temperature has become quite normal, he may be started on milk. If there is a tumour, it should be treated with hot water poultice, which should be changed often. A piece of thick cloth 1½ ft. long and 9 in. broad should be wetted with hot water and the water drained out, placing the cloth in a dry handkerchief. The cloth should then be folded up into four layers and placed on the tumour, as hot as the patient can bear, and the tumour should be bandaged up. The poultice should be changed after every 30 minutes. In this disease, the patient's heart grows very weak and he should, therefore, be given complete rest.

10. The man attending on the patient should keep away from others and avoid any work which requires contacts with them. To ensure his own safety, he should reduce his food to a minimum and otherwise be very careful of his health. He should not worry at all. If he feels constipated, he should take an enema to clear the intestines and live only on fruits.

11. The patient's clothes should not be washed in a river or at any other place where others' clothes are washed. They should be soaked in boiling soap water. If they are very dirty, they should be burnt away. The bedding, etc., should not be used by anyone else and, if clean enough, it should be dried in the sun daily for eight days, exposing both sides by turns to sunshine. If one can afford it, one should have it burnt away.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 6399

39. LETTER TO A. H. WEST

MOTIHARI,
December 10, 1917

MY DEAR WEST,

I have your important letter before me. My view is that if you can turn out *Indian Opinion* only by removing to Town[1], you should suspend publication. I do not like the idea of your competing for jobs or advertisements. I think that when that time comes we shall have outlived our purpose. I would rather that you sold out Phœnix and you and Sam[2] were engaged in some other independent work. If you can make of Phœnix something without the Paper, I shall like the idea. But if you cannot even eke out a living from agriculture at Phœnix, Phœnix should be sold. Hilda's education can remain in your own hands. Surely some drastic steps are necessary for a due fulfilment of one's ideals.

If you cannot support yourself out of Phœnix with or without the Paper and cannot secure a decent job for yourself, I must find your maintenance from here. You will then let me know how much you will require and for how long. For I presume that you will try to secure work there. I am quite willing to have Devi[3] here if she would come and even you if you could come alone for a time. But I know that Mrs. Pywell[4] and perhaps Mrs. West too may not like the climate or the surroundings here.

If Manilal wants to try his hand at turning out a sheet himself at any cost, he may be allowed to do it.

This I know that the proposed attempt in Town must become a dismal failure. We left it because we found it unworkable. We have arrived at all the stages after careful deliberation and as they were found necessary. Your methods cannot be those of ordinary business men. You will soon tire. Why try what is

[1] Durban; the paper was being printed at Phœnix.

[2] Govindswami, engineer in the Phœnix settlement; *vide* also Vol. IV, p. 432.

[3] Miss Ada West

[4] Addressee's mother-in-law

foredoomed to failure? I would like to let Manilal have a hand if he will but try. I am writing[1] to him.[2]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 4427. Courtesy: A. H. West

40. LETTER TO J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
[December][3] *10, 1917*

DEAR MR. MERRIMAN,

I returned from my tours early this morning, and found a letter lying for me. I enclose copy of same[4] herewith.

Dr. Deva tells me that in Mitiharva and the surrounding villages, nearly 50 p.c. of the population is suffering from a fever which often proves fatal. Our workers are rendering all the assistance they can.

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original in Gandhiji's hand in the National Archives of India; also *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*

41. LETTER TO GOVINDSWAMI

MOTIHARI,
December 11, 1917

MY DEAR SAM,

Mr. West has asked me whether it may not be advisable to shift to Town. My answer is in the negative. I would feel deeply hurt if you cannot keep up *Indian Opinion* in Phœnix. In any case you should not remove the works. If you cannot turn out the Paper

[1] The letter is not available. However, Gandhiji also wrote to Govindswami the following day in regard to the proposal.

[2] On receipt of the letter, West replied by cable and a letter dated March 3; *vide* "Cable to A. H. West", about February 24, 1918.

[3] The original has "November" which is a slip. Gandhiji returned to Motihari on December 10 and wrote this letter the same day.

[4] For the enclosure, a letter from Baban Gokhalay, *vide* Appendix V.

in Phœnix, it must be stopped. You should then try to get a living from agriculture alone devoting the whole of your time to it. If that too fails, you should earn your living in Town. I have suggested to Manilal that he should, with the assistance of Ram[1], Devi Behn and Nagarji alone, turn out the Gujarati part only. If Ram and even Nagarji cannot be supported they too should go. I do not care even if two sheets only are turned out in Gujarati every week.

You are on your trial. Please do not fail. We cannot compete in job work with the printers in Durban.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 4428. Courtesy: A. H. West

42. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING[2]

MOTIHARI,
CHAMPARAN,
December 12, 1917

DEAR ESTHER,

Your letter just received grieves me. "Be careful for nothing" comes to my lips as I write these lines. Why fret and worry? You are just now passing through fire.[3] I am sure you will come out unhurt. It is your clear duty just now to obey those to whom you have given the right to control your movements. You can oppose them only when they clearly hinder your spiritual progress. They receive the benefit of any doubt. You could certainly reason with them that just at this time of the year you will have perfect weather in Ahmedabad, loving attention and no worry. The very change of surroundings is likely to do you good. If you still fail, you have to accept their opposition with resignation. Please do not worry over your exam. That is a mere nothing.

[1] Worker in the International Printing Press, *vide* Vol. V, p. 79.

[2] Esther Faering came to India in 1916, as a member of the staff of the Danish Missionary Society. Entrusted with educational work, she visited Sabarmati Ashram in 1917 and was much drawn to it. Her Mission did not approve of her contacts and correspondence with Gandhiji, to whom she became attached as a daughter. Later, in 1919, she resigned and became an inmate of the Ashram for some time. Gandhiji's letters to her over a period of nearly 20 years were published in 1956 under the title *My Dear Child*.

[3] The Mission authorities had refused her permission to spend the Christmas holidays at the Ashram.

We are best tried when we are thwarted in what to us are holy purposes. God's ways are strange and inscrutable. Not our will but His must be our Law.

Please write to me frequently and, up to the end of the year, send your letters to Motihari. I should even value a telegram saying you are at peace with yourself, if you are that when you receive this.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

My Dear Child, pp. 23-4

43. LETTER TO E. L. L. HAMMOND

MOTIHARI,
December 15, 1917

DEAR MR. HAMMOND[1],

I have just received your note of the 13th instant.[2] Having, after the conversation with you, concluded that my services will not be wanted, I have accepted important engagements up to the end of March next, and have just now entered upon an educational and hygienic experiment[3] to which I attach the greatest importance and which requires my constant attention. I should not like to leave this work and yet I do not want to lose any chance of taking what little share I can in the present War. I may find it practically impossible to raise a corps on which I might not be serving. I would also find it difficult to get men if I could not assure them that they would all work in a body and with me. Will you please tell me in detail what your different requirements are and when you will want the corps and I shall see whether I can fit in. You will please tell me in each case the nature of work required and, if possible, the destination of the proposed corps.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

[1] Egbert Lawrie Lucas Hammond, I.C.S.; became Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa, 1924; author of *Indian Election Petitions, The Indian Candidate and Returning Officer*

[2] This was about Gandhiji's willingness to raise a labour corps in Champaran for service in Mesopotamia; *vide* Appendix VI.

[3] The reference is to the schools which Gandhiji was setting up in Champaran at the time.

44. LETTER TO "INDIAN OPINION"[1]

MOTIHARI,
December 15, 1917

When I left South Africa, I had fully intended to write to my Indian and English friends there from time to time, but I found my lot in India to be quite different from what I had expected it to be. I had hoped to be able to have comparative peace and leisure but I have been irresistibly drawn into many activities. I hardly cope with them and local daily correspondence. Half of my time is passed in the Indian trains. My South African friends will, I hope, forgive me for my apparent neglect of them. Let me assure them that not a day has passed when I have not thought of them and their kindness. South African associations can never be effaced from my memory.

You will not now be surprised when I tell you that it was only today that I learnt from *Indian Opinion* to hand, about the disastrous floods. During my travels I rarely read newspapers and I have time merely to glance at them whilst I am not travelling. I write this to tender my sympathy to the sufferers. My imagination enables me to draw a true picture of their sufferings. They make one think of God and His might and the utter evanescence of this life. They ought to teach us ever to seek His protection and never to fail in the daily duty before us. In the divine account books only our actions are noted, not what we have spoken. These and similar reflections fill my soul for the moment and I wish to share them with the sufferers. The deep poverty that I experience in this country deters me even from thinking of financial assistance to be sent for those who have been rendered homeless. Even one pie in this country counts. I am, at this very moment, living in the midst of thousands who have nothing but roasted pulse or grain-flour mixed with water and salt. We, therefore, can only send the sufferers an assurance of our heartfelt grief.

I hope that a determined movement will be set on foot to render residence on flats exposed to visitations of death-dealing floods illegal. The poor will, if they can, inhabit even such sites regardless of consequences. It is for the enlightened persons to make it impossible for them to do so.

[1] This was published under the caption "Advice to South African Indians".

The issues of *Indian Opinion* that acquainted me with the destruction caused by the floods gave me also the sad news of Mr. Abdul Gani's[1] death. Please convey my respectful condolences to the members of our friend's family. Mr. Abdul Gani's services to the community can never be forgotten. His sobriety of judgment and never-failing courtesy would have done credit to anybody. His wise handling of public questions was a demonstration of the fact that services to one's country could be effectively rendered without a knowledge of English or modern training. I note, too, that our people in South Africa are not yet free from difficulties about trade licences and leaving certificates. My Indian experience has confirmed the opinion that there is no remedy like passive resistance against such evils. The community has to exhaust milder remedies, but I hope that it will not allow the sword of passive resistance to get rusty. It is our duty, whilst the terrible war lasts, to be satisfied with petitions, etc., for the desired relief, but I think the Government should know that the community will not rest until the questions above mentioned are satisfactorily solved. It is but right that I should also warn the community against dangers from within. I hear from those who return from South Africa that we are by no means free of those who are engaged in illicit traffic. We, who seek justice, must be above suspicion, and I hope that our leaders will not rest till they have purged the community of internal defects.

The Hindu, 4-3-1918

45. SPEECH AT NADIAD[2]

December 16, 1917

. . .He alluded to impending changes and said that all should work solely for their country. If they did this, they should have swaraj without asking Mr. Montagu for it. He condemned the Mohwa Flowers Act and said that

[1] Prominent Natal business man; Chairman, British Indian Association, 1903-7.

[2] On his arrival, Gandhiji was received at the station by Home Rule Leaguers of Nadiad and led in a procession to the house of Gokaldas Dwarkadas Talati. After attending a private meeting to consider effective measures for implementing resolutions passed at the Gujarat Political Conference, he addressed a public meeting at 8 p.m. About 5,000 people were present. Before leaving Nadiad the same night, Gandhiji visited the Hindu Orphanage.

Government had been misinformed. The lecturer then discoursed on the plague epidemic and gave much good advice about killing rats and observing cleanliness in the name of religion. He also pointed out that many of the present-day epidemics were due to the people not having sufficient milk as the dairies bought it all up. . . .

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1917

46. *LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI*

MOTIHARI,
Magshar Sud 4, Samvat 1974 [*December 18, 1917*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

You want a long letter, but I am sorry I cannot manage one just now. Moreover, I have got some work for the Social Service League to attend to. I feel that, while my star is in the ascendant, I should do all I can to spread my ideals. Let us hope that, by being watchful about rats and maintaining cleanliness, we shall prevent the plague from spreading to the Ashram.[1] Read and ponder over *Premal Jyoti Taro Dakhavi*[2]. We may plan for the future, but should not desire to see it.

The teachers' quarters were to be put up immediately. What came of this? Both Narahari[3] and Vrajlal are keeping fit. Devdas continues [to work] in the School. Surendra[4] also. Ba has joined me.[5]

Take good care of your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5708. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

[1] The plague had broken out in Kochrab village, which had prompted Gandhiji to quit the place and set up the Ashram at Sabarmati; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. XXI.

[2] Narasimhrao Divetia's Gujarati translation of Gandhiji's favourite hymn, Newman's *Lead, Kindly Light*

[3] Narahari Dwarkadas Parikh, an associate of Gandhiji

[4] An inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

[5] Kasturba Gandhi was working in a school at Motihari.

47. LETTER TO REVENUE SECRETARY

MOTIHARI,
December 19, 1917

TO
THE SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR AND ORISSA
REVENUE DEPARTMENT
[PATNA

SIR,]

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 116-II-T-44-R.T. of the 6th December 1917, enclosing copy of the Champaran Agrarian Bill and inviting my remarks thereon.[1] I beg to submit as follows :—

(1) With reference to Section 4, I observe that although both sub-sections (a) and (b) apply to the same transaction, sub-section (a) covers a wider area than sub-section (b), I have not been able to conjecture any reason for it. But I suggest that the wording of sub-section (b) may be copied for sub-section (a) and, therefore, the word "condition" occurring in the second line of sub-section (a) be removed. And the words "Section 3" occurring in line 3 thereof may be replaced by "sub-section 2 of Section 3".

(2) With reference to Section 5, I beg to state that the Committee's recommendations cover contracts between landlords and *raiyats*, not their tenants as well as their tenants.

There are numerous cases in which *raiyats* enter into contracts with zamindars who are not their landlords. It is necessary, therefore, to amend the wording "a tenant whether holding under him" occurring in line 2 thereof by saying "a tenant whether holding, under him or otherwise", and by removing the words "grown upon the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof" occurring in lines 3 and 4 of the Section.

[1] Copies of the Champaran Agrarian Bill, after it had been referred to the Select Committee were forwarded by the Revenue Secretary to Gandhiji, the Bihar Land Holders' Association and the Bihar Planters' Association for opinion.

It is suggested that these last words are redundant. It is intended that the Legislature should protect the *raiyats* in respect of all contracts as betweeen zamindars and the *raiyats* concerning the sale of produce.

(3) With reference to Section 6, I fear that as it stands it is calculated to produce results the reverse of what is contemplated by the Government and the Committee. Under sub-section (1) thereof, an agent who is a mere straw may be put up by an unscrupulous landlord to collect *abwab*[1]. Such an agent, if he is detected, will unhesitatingly suffer the penalties prescribed by the Section, as the landlord of the type mentioned by me will always make [it] worth his while to do so. I, therefore, suggest that it is necessary in every case to make the landlord liable. Sub-section (1), therefore, should be amended by removing the words "or his agent" occurring in line 1 and by adding the words "whether directly or through an agent" after the pronoun "who" in the said line. Sub-section 3 of the said Section should be entirely removed. It is possible for a poor ignorant *raiyat* to be in the right and yet be unable to prove his case. It will be a gross injustice if such an innocent *raiyat* is punished. Moreover, the existence of such sub-section will act as an effective deterrent against any *raiyats* lodging a complaint about *abwab*. It should be added that the power of punishing complainants for lodging false complaints is to be sparingly used. It requires a highly trained judicial mind to arrive at a firm conclusion as to complaints being false. It is, therefore, a dangerous thing to give summary powers to a Collector who will not be acting judicially. Lastly, a single abortion of justice under sub-section 3 is bound to result in an unscrupulous landlord being bolder in his exactions, for he will know that the *raiyats* after proceedings under sub-section 3 will have been cowed down. Considering all the above circumstances, I trust that the sub-section in question will be removed. If, however, it is found difficult to carry the amendments to Section 6 as proposed by me, I suggest that the whole of the Section be withdrawn. I would far rather have the less effective protection of Section 75 of the Bengal Tenancy Act than have the doubtful protection of Section 6.

(4) I observe that cart *sattas*[2] dealt with by the Committee have been covered by the proposed law. There are such *sattas* running into anything between 7 and 20 years with the same rate

[1] Cesses assessed on land over and above the actual rent

[2] Contracts for the supply of goods involving payment of an advance

of payment throughout. Several planters in reply to questions by the Committee not being able to justify the terms of their *sattas* said that they did not enforce them as a matter of fact. I venture to suggest that there ought to be a section declaring such *sattas* to be void. New *sattas*, if necessary for short periods, may be entered into after the rate of hire is fixed in consultation with the Divisional Commissioner. I may state, even at the present moment, proceedings for damages for breach of these *sattas* are pending.

I have read the correspondence in the Press carried on by Messrs Irwin[1] and Jameson[2] and I have read also the speeches delivered by Messrs Jameson and Kennedy[3] in the Council on the Bill. Regarding both I wish merely to state that there is a complete answer to every one of the statements made by these writers and speakers. I have refrained from saying anything about them for fear of unnecessarily burdening the Government. But should any point raised by these gentlemen require elucidation from me, I shall be pleased to offer my views on any such point on hearing from you.

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

48. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Magshar Sud 8 [December 21, 1917]

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I have not been able to write to you [as frequently] as I would wish. I sometimes feel like writing to Meva[4], too. Sometimes I put off writing in the hope of being able to write a good letter and then it happens that I do not even write an indifferent one. I should like you not to be irregular in writing letters. I have not read your translation. I am handing it over to Mahadev[5]

[1] W. S. Irwin

[2] & [3] J. V. Jameson and Pringle Kennedy, members of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, served on the select committee set up to consider the Champaran Agrarian Bill, 1917. Kennedy was a pleader of Muzaffarpur, appointed to the Council, for the period of the pending legislation, as an expert. He had acted as legal adviser to the Bihar Planters' Association.

[4] Addressee's wife

[5] Mahadev Haribhai Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's Private Secretary and associate

today. He at any rate will read it and write to you. I shall also go over it. But I shall take some time. I have one by Valjibhai[1] too. I shall send it to you to have a look at. I am sending you a volume brought out by Natesan.[2]

Stay there without any worry and go on with your work. The Doctor is all love for you. Don't be disheartened. You may not be doing as well as you would like to, but anyone who makes an honest effort is bound to produce a good impression on others. Let me also know how things are with Meva. How is your health?

My activities are expanding. I am wearing myself out in placing my ideals before the country while my star is in the ascendant.

Mahadev will give you some idea about the situation here. He has joined only recently but is an old hand already.

Manilal is being severely tried in Phœnix. Write to him, as also to Ramdas[3]. The latter has taken up service with a tailor in Johannesburg. Ba and Devdas will go with me to Calcutta. I shall be there up to the 30th.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MEVA,

You should write even if I do not. When you think you can stay with me all by yourself, I shall readily have you at Champaran. But that is a risk to be taken only when you desire it. I know there can be nothing better for you than to stay with Jamnadas at present.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5705. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Valji Govindji Desai, an inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, worked on the editorial staff of *Young India*

[2] The reference is to *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*.

[3] Gandhiji's third son

49. *LETTER TO AMBALAL SARABHAI*

MOTIHARI,
December 21, 1917

DEAR BHAI AMBALALJI,

I do not wish to interfere with your business affairs at all. However, I have had a letter from Krishnalal[1] today which leaves me no option but to write. I think you should satisfy the weavers for the sake of Shrimati Anasuyabehn[2] at any rate. There is no reason to believe that, if you satisfy these, you will have others clamouring. Even if that should happen, you can do what you think fit then. Why should not the mill-owners feel happy paying a little more to the workers? There is only one royal road to remove their discontent: entering their lives and binding them with the silken thread of love. This is not beyond India. Ultimately, the right use of money is to spend it for the country; if you spend money for the country, it is bound to yield fruit. How could a brother be the cause of suffering to a sister?—and that, too, a sister like Anasuyabehn? I have found that she has a soul which is absolutely pure. It would be nothing strange if you took her word to be law. You are, thus, under a double obligation : to please the workers and earn a sister's blessings. My presumption, too, is doubly serious; in a single letter I have meddled in your business and your family affairs. Do forgive me.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Krishnalal N. Desai, a public worker of Ahmedabad, one of the Secretaries of the Gujarat Sabha

[2] Addressee's sister

50. LETTER TO H. KALLENBACH[1]

MOTIHARI,
December 21, 1917

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have been irregular of late. I have been wandering so much that I never have the leisure to write love letters especially when they get lost. From you I had had only three letters during the past three months. Polak has however written to me about you and so has Miss Winterbottom[2]. How often do I not want to hug you. Daily do I have novel experiences here which I should like you to share with me. But this monstrous War never seems to be ending. All the peace talk only enhances the agony. However, like all human institutions it must have an end, and our friendship must be a poor affair if it cannot bide its time and be all the stronger and purer for the weary waiting. And what is this physical form after all? As I was whizzing through the air yesterday and looking at the trees, I saw that beneath all the change that these mighty trees daily underwent, there was a something that persisted. Every leaf has its own separate life. It drops and withers. But the tree lives on. Every tree falls in process of time or under the cruel axe, but the forest of which the tree is but a part lives and so with us leaves of the human tree. We may wither, but the eternal in us lives on, changeless and endless. I derived much comfort last evening as I was thus musing. The thoughts went on to you and I sighed, but I regained self-possession and said to myself, "I know my friend not for his form but for that which informs him."

With love,
Your old friend,

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Hermann Kallenbach, German architect, sympathizer of the Indian cause in South Africa and a friend of Gandhiji. He wanted to accompany Gandhiji to India in December 1914, but could not get a passport due to the War and was interned in England; *vide An Autobiography*, Part IV, Ch. XLIII; also Vol. XI, pp. 134-6 and Vol. XII, pp. 528-9.

[2] Florence A. Winterbottom, corresponding Secretary, Union of Ethical Societies, London; *vide* Vol. IX, pp. 285-6.

51. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA SOCIAL SERVICE CONFERENCE[1]

CALCUTTA,
December 27, 1917

. . .Mr. Gandhi addressed the gathering, which was by now from one end to the other of the College Square, in Hindi and announced that as the proposed programme of the Conference was impossible to be carried out, it was postponed to some other time and place.

The Bengalee, 28-12-1917

52. INTERVIEW TO "THE BENGALEE"[2]

CALCUTTA,
December 27, 1917

. . .Mr. Gandhi, interviewed, said that he was strongly in favour of the Conference being held just after the Congress was over in the Congress pandal, and admission being limited by tickets at certain prices, the sale proceeds going towards social service. . . .

The Bengalee, 28-12-1917

53. RESOLUTION AT INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS[3]

CALCUTTA,
December 29, 1917

This Congress re-expresses its regret that the British Indians of South Africa still labour under disabilities which materially affect

[1] The Conference which was scheduled to be held on December 27 at Calcutta University Institute Hall had to be postponed because of difficulty in accommodating the unprecedented crowd of people who had turned up to hear Gandhiji and others.

[2] After the postponement of the Social Service Conference, Gandhiji gave an interview to *The Bengalee*, of which only a brief report is available.

[3] This was the thirteenth resolution passed at the 32nd Indian National Congress Session at Calcutta and was moved by Gandhiji. He spoke in Hindi.

their trade and render their residence difficult, and unjustly and unduly restrict their movement to and in these parts of the Empire, and hopes that the local authorities will realise their responsibility to the Indians who have, in spite of disabilities, taken their full share in the War by raising corps and otherwise remove the disabilities complained of, and authorises the President to cable the substance of the resolution to the respective authorities.

Report of the 32nd Session of the Indian National Congress, 1917

54. *RESOLUTION AT ALL-INDIA SOCIAL SERVICE CONFERENCE*[1]

CALCUTTA,
December 30, 1917

That this Conference is of opinion that the measures adopted by the Government and certain associations for the education and elevation of the depressed classes have served the purpose of drawing public attention to the existence of degrading social inequality and to their detrimental influence on the general progress of the country. But in the opinion of this Conference, the measures hitherto adopted are quite inadequate to meet these evils. This Conference, therefore, urges upon the Government and Social Reform Bodies (1) to provide greater facilities for the education of the depressed classes, and (2) to enforce equality of treatment in all public institutions so as to remove the prejudice and disabilities of untouchableness.

The Bengalee, 5-1-1918

[1] Held in the Congress pandal and presided over by Dr. P. C. Ray, the Conference was attended, among others, by Rabindranath Tagore. The resolution which was proposed by Gandhiji was seconded by Nattore Maharaja and supported by M. R. Jayakar.

55. SPEECH AT FIRST BENGAL AGRICULTURISTS' CONFERENCE[1]

CALCUTTA,
December 30, 1917

. . .Mr. Gandhi said agriculture was the principal occupation of the Indians and that it was a most honourable profession. The speaker had worked among agriculturists and knew all their wants, grievances complaints, and needs. He would, however, very soon take to agriculture himself and try to do what he could to improve the lot of the peasantry. He sincerely hoped that the peasants would very soon improve their conditions. As he had come with Pandit Malaviyaji on their way to some other place, he was forced to be very short.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-1-1918

56. SPEECH AT NATIONAL LANGUAGE CONFERENCE[2]

December 30, 1917

It would be a great advantage if Lokamanya Tilak would speak in Hindi. He should, like Lord Dufferin and Lady Chelmsford, try to learn Hindi. Even Queen Victoria learned Hindi. It is my submission to Malaviyaji that he should see to it that, at the Congress next year, no speeches are made in any language except Hindi. My complaint is that, at the Congress yesterday, he did not speak in Hindi.

[From Hindi]
Pratap, 7-1-1918

[1] The Conference was held in the Muslim League pandal under the chairmanship of C. R. Das. About 5,000 people were present. Gandhiji, with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, attended the Conference.

[2] Gandhiji addressed the Conference which was held at the Alfred Theatre, under the presidentship of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. It was attended, among others, by Madan Mohan Malaviya and Sarojini Naidu.

57. RESOLUTION AT NATIONAL LANGUAGE CONFERENCE[1]

CALCUTTA,
December 30, 1917

That, in view of the fact that the Hindi language is very widely used by the people of the different provinces and is easily understood by the majority of them, it seems practicable to take advantage of this language as a common language for India.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-1-1918

58. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE[2]

CALCUTTA,
December 31, 1917

Mr. Gandhi, in an Urdu speech, urged the futility of paper resolutions and appealed to them for solid work. Everyone, whether a Mussulman or a Hindu, he said, should tell Government that, if they did not release them [Ali Brothers], they ought themselves to be interned with them. He assured them, amidst loud cheers, that Hindus were, to a man, with them, in the agitation for the release of the Muslims interned.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-1-1918

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Gandhiji attended the session of the League on the second day and spoke briefly about the treatment of the Ali Brothers.

59. SPEECH AT UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE[1]

CALCUTTA,
December 31, 1917

. . .Mr. Gandhi regretted that there should be a lack of the understanding and knowledge of Hindi by Indians. All were eager, he said, to do national service, but there could be no national service without a national tongue. He regretted that his Bengali friends were committing national suicide by omitting to use their national tongue, without which one cannot reach hearts of the masses. In that sense, the wide use of Hindi would come within the purview of humanitarianism.

Mr. Gandhi next passed to another phase of humanitarianism, viz., sacrifice of animals before goddesses and slaughter for food. The Hindu shastras do not really advocate animal sacrifice. This current practice is one of the many things which have passed under the name of Hinduism. The Hindu religion aptly finds expression in the two aphorisms—"Harmlessness is the best form of religion" and "There is no force higher than Truth", and these principles are incompatible with the cruel practice of animal sacrifice.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-1-1918

60. ADDRESS AT ALL-INDIA SOCIAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

CALCUTTA,
December 31, 1917

Mr. Gandhi in taking the chair spoke as follows:

If I want to hear music, I must come to Bengal. If I want to listen to poetry, I must come to Bengal. India is contained in Bengal, but not Bengal in India. I heard some Marwari boys singing songs. It was like jargon. I told them to associate with the Bengalis.

[1] Gandhiji took the chair at a meeting held under the auspices of the Bengal and Bombay Humanitarian Funds. In deference to the wish expressed by the audience, he addressed them in English; this is a summary of the speech. Speaking later, in Hindi, Madan Mohan Malaviya deprecated animal sacrifice.

He then delivered the following presidential address.[1]

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the honour you have conferred upon me. I was totally unprepared for the invitation to preside over the deliberations of this assembly. I do not know that I am fitted for the task. Having fixed views about the use of Hindi at national gatherings, I am always disinclined to speak in English. And I felt that the time was not ripe for me to ask to be allowed to deliver the presidential speech in Hindi. Moreover, I have not much faith in conferences. Social service to be effective has to be rendered without noise. It is best performed when the left hand knoweth not what the right is doing. Sir Gibble's work told because nobody knew it. He could not be spoiled by praise or held back by blame. Would that our service were of this nature! Holding such views, it was not without considerable hesitation and misgivings that I obeyed the summons of the Reception Committee. You will, therefore, pardon me if you find in me a candid critic rather than an enthusiast carrying the conference to its goal with confidence and assurance.

It seems to me then that I cannot do better than draw attention to some branches of social service which we have hitherto more or less ignored.

The greatest service we can render society is to free ourselves and it from the superstitious regard we have learnt to pay to the learning of the English language. It is the medium of instruction in our schools and colleges. It is becoming the lingua franca of the country. Our best thoughts are expressed in it. Lord Chelmsford hopes that it will soon take the place of the mother tongue in high families. This belief in the necessity of English training has enslaved us. It has unfitted us for true national service. Were it not for force of habit, we could not fail to see that, by reason of English being the medium of instruction, our intellect has been segregated, we have been isolated from the masses, the best mind of the nation has become gagged and the masses have not received the benefit of the new ideas we have received. We

[1] This presidential address was to have been delivered at the opening session of the conference on December 27, which was postponed; *vide* "Speech at All-India Social Service Conference", 27-12-1917. Taking no notice of the postponement, however, *New India* published it in its issue dated December 28. Gandhiji presided over and addressed the conference in the Y.M.C.A. premises.

have been engaged these past sixty years in memorizing strange words and their pronunciation instead of assimilating facts. In the place of building upon the foundation, training received from our parents, we have almost unlearnt it. There is no parallel to this in history. It is a national tragedy. The first and the greatest social service we can render is to revert to our vernaculars, to restore Hindi to its natural place as the national language and begin carrying on all our provincial proceedings in our respective vernaculars and national proceedings in Hindi. We ought not to rest till our schools and colleges give us instruction through the vernaculars. It ought not to be necessary even for the sake of our English friends to have to speak in English. Every English civil and military officer has to know Hindi. Most English merchants learn it because they need it for their business. The day must soon come when our legislatures will debate national affairs in the vernaculars or Hindi, as the case may be. Hitherto the masses have been strangers to their proceedings. The vernacular papers have tried to undo the mischief a little. But the task was beyond them. The *Patrika* reserves its biting sarcasm, *The Bengalee* its learning, for ears tuned to English. In this ancient land of cultured thinkers, the presence in our midst of a Tagore or a Bose or a Ray ought not to excite wonder. Yet the painful fact is that there are so few of them. You will forgive me if I have carried too long on a subject which, in your opinion, may hardly be treated as an item of social service. I have however taken the liberty of mentioning the matter prominently as it is my conviction that all national activity suffers materially owing to this radical defect in our system of education.

Coming to more familiar items of social service, the list is appalling. I shall select only those of which I have any knowledge.

Work in times of sporadic distress such as famine and floods is no doubt necessary and most praiseworthy. But it produces no permanent results. There are fields of social service in which there may be no renown but which may yield lasting results.

In 1914, cholera, fevers and plague together claimed 4,639,663 victims. If so many had died fighting on the battle-field during the War that is at present devastating Europe, we would have covered ourselves with glory and lovers of swaraj would need no further argument in support of their cause. As it is, 4,639,663 have died a lingering death unmourned and their dying has brought us nothing but discredit. A distinguished Englishman said the other day that Englishmen did all the thinking for us whilst we sat

supine. He added that most Englishmen basing their opinions on their English experience presented impossible or costly remedies for the evils they investigated. There is much truth in the above statement. In other countries, reformers have successfully grappled with epidemics. Here Englishmen have tried and failed. They have thought along Western lines, ignoring the vast differences, climatic and other, between Europe and India. Our doctors and physicians have practically done nothing. I am sure that half a dozen medical men of the front rank dedicating their lives to the work of eradicating the triple curse would succeed where Englishmen have failed. I venture to suggest that the way lies not through finding out cures but through finding or rather applying preventive methods. I prefer to use the participle "applying", for I have it on the aforementioned authority that to drive out plague (and I add cholera and malaria) is absurdly simple. There is no conflict of opinion as to the preventive methods. We simply do not apply them. We have made up our minds that the masses will not adopt them. There could be no greater calumny uttered against them. If we would but stoop to conquer, they can be easily conquered. The truth is that we expect the Government to do the work. In my opinion, in this matter, the Government cannot lead; they can follow and help if we could lead. Here, then, there is work enough for our doctors and an army of workers to help them. I note that you in Bengal are working somewhat in this direction. I may state that a small but earnest band of volunteers is at the present moment engaged in doing such work in Champaran. They are posted in different villages. There they teach the village children, they give medical aid to the sick and they give practical lessons in hygiene to the village folk by cleaning their wells and roads and showing them how to treat human excreta. Nothing can yet be predicted as to results as the experiment is in its infancy. This Conference may usefully appoint a committee of doctors who would study rural conditions on the spot and draw up a course of instructions for the guidance of workers and of the people at large.

Nothing perhaps affords such splendid facility to every worker, wholetime or otherwise, for effective service as the relief of agony through which the 3rd class railway passengers are passing. I feel keenly about this grievance not because I am in it, but I have gone to it as I have felt keenly about it. This matter affects millions of our poor and middle-class countrymen. This helpless toleration of every inconvenience and insult is visibly deteriorating the nation, even as the cruel treatment to which we have subjected

the so-called depressed classes has made them indifferent to the laws of personal cleanliness and the very idea of self-respect. What else but downright degradation can await those who have to make a scramble always like mad animals for seats in a miserable compartment, who have to swear and curse before they can speak through the window in order to get standing room, who have to wallow in dirt during their journey, who are served their food like dogs and eat it like them, who have ever to bend before those who are physically stronger than they and who, being packed like sardines in compartments, have to get such sleep as they can in a sitting posture for nights together? Railway servants swear at them, cheat them. On the Howrah-Lahore service, our friends from Kabul fill to the brim the cup of the misery of the third-class travellers. They become lords of the compartments they enter. It is not possible for anyone to resist them. They swear at you on the slightest pretext, exhaust the whole of the obscene vocabulary of Hindi language. They do not hesitate to belabour you if you retort or in any way oppose them. They usurp the best seats and insist on stretching themselves full length even in crowded compartments. No compartment is deemed too crowded for them to enter. The travellers patiently bear all their awful impertinence out of sheer helplessness. They would, if they could, knock down the man who dared to swear at them as do these Kabulis. But they are physically no match for the Kabulis and every Kabuli considers himself more than a match for any number of travellers from the plains. This is not right. The effect of this terrorizing on the national character cannot but be debasing. We the educated few ought to deliver the travelling public from this scourge or for ever renounce our claim to speak on its behalf or to guide it. I believe the Kabulis to be amenable to reason. They are a God-fearing people. If you know their language, you can successfully appeal to their good sense. But they are spoilt children of nature. Cowards among us have used their undoubted physical strength for our nefarious purposes. And they have now come to think that they can treat poor people as they choose and consider themselves above the law of the land. Here is work enough for social service. Volunteers for this class of work can board trains and educate the people to a sense of their duty, call in guards and other officials in order to remove over-crowding, see that passengers leave and board trains without a scramble. It is clear that until the Kabulis can be patiently taught to behave themselves, they ought to have a compartment all to themselves and they ought not to be permitted to enter any other compartment.

With the exception of providing additional plant, every one of the other evils attendant on railway travelling ought to be immediately redressed. It is no answer that we have suffered the wrong so long. Prescriptive rights cannot accrue to wrongs.

No less important is the problem of the depressed classes. To lift them from the position to which Hindu society has reduced them is to remove a big blot on Hinduism. The present treatment of these classes is a sin against religion and humanity.

But the work requires service of the highest order. We shall make little headway by merely throwing schools at them. We must change the attitude of the masses and of orthodoxy. I have already shown that we have cut ourselves adrift from both. We do not react on them. We can do so only if we speak to them in their own language. An anglicized India cannot speak to them with effect. If we believe in Hinduism, we must approach them in the Hindu fashion. We must do *tapasya* and keep our Hinduism undefiled. Pure and enlightened orthodoxy must be matched against superstitious and ignorant orthodoxy. To restore to their proper status a fifth of our total population is a task worthy of any social service organization.

The *bustees* of Calcutta and the chawls of Bombay badly demand the devoted services of hundreds of social workers. They send our infants to an early grave and promote vice, degradation and filth.

Apart from the fundamental evil arising out of our defective system of education, I have hitherto dealt with evils calling for service among the masses. The classes perhaps demand no less attention than the masses. It is my opinion that all evils like diseases are symptoms of the same evil or disease. They appear various by being refracted through different media. The root evil is loss of true spirituality brought about through causes I cannot examine from this platform. We have lost the robust faith of our forefathers in the absolute efficacy of *satya* (truth), ahimsa (love) and *brahmacharya* (self-restraint). We certainly believe in them to an extent. They are the best policy but we may deviate from them if our untrained reason suggests deviation. We have not faith enough to feel that, though the present outlook seems bleak, if we follow the dictates of truth or love or exercise self-restraint, the ultimate result must be sound. Men whose spiritual vision has become blurred mostly look to the present rather than conserve the future good. He will render the greatest social service who will reinstate us in our ancient spirituality. But humble men that we are, it is enough for us if we recognize the loss and,

by such ways as are open to us, prepare the way for the man who will infect us with his power and enable us to feel clearly through our reason.

Looking then at the classes, I find that our Rajahs and Maharajahs squander their resources after so-called useless sport and drink. I was told the other day that the cocaine habit was sapping the nation's manhood and that, like the drink habit, it was on the increase and in its effect more deadly than drink. It is impossible for a social worker to blind himself to the evil. We dare not ape the West. We are a nation that has lost its prestige and its self-respect. Whilst a tenth of our population is living on the verge of starvation, we have no time for indulging ourselves. What the West may do with impunity is likely in our case to prove our ruin. The evils that are corroding the higher strata of society are difficult for an ordinary worker to tackle. They have acquired a certain degree of respectability. But they ought not to be beyond the reach of this Conference.

Equally important is the question of the status of women, both Hindu and Mahomedan. Are they or are they not to play their full part in the plan of regeneration alongside their husbands? They must be enfranchised. They can no longer be treated either as dolls or slaves without the social body remaining in a condition of social paralysis. And here again, I would venture to suggest to the reformer that the way to women's freedom is not through education, but through the change of attitude on the part of men and corresponding action. Education is necessary, but it must follow the freedom. We dare not wait for literary education to restore our womanhood to its proper state. Even without literary education, our women are as cultured as any on the face of the earth. The remedy largely lies in the hands of husbands.

It makes my blood boil as I wander through the country and watch lifeless and fleshless oxen, with their ribs sticking through their skins, carrying loads or ploughing our fields. To improve the breed of our cattle, to rescue them from the cruelty practised on them by their cow-worshipping masters and to save them from the slaughter-house is to solve half the problem of our poverty. . . . We have to educate the people to a humane use of their cattle and plead with the Government to conserve the pasture land of the country. Protection of the cow is an economic necessity. It cannot be brought about by force. It can only be achieved by an appeal to the finer feelings of our English friends and our Mahomedan countrymen to save the cow from the slaughter-house. This question involves the overhauling of the management of our

month, how could he be content with 14 or 15s ? If he wanted to remain free, he would have, assuming that he had one son and one daughter, to pay £12 every year by way of tax, including the tax on his wife. How could he pay this exorbitant tax? The Indian community had been fighting against this tax from the very beginning. There had been repercussions in India too. But the tax had yet to be repealed then. Along with many other things, Gokhale was to demand repeal of this tax. He had been boiling over as if this tax on his poor brethren were a tax on himself. He brought into play the entire strength of his spirit when he met General Botha. So strong was the impression that his words created on Generals Botha and Smuts that they yielded and gave him a promise to repeal the tax during the ensuing session of the Parliament. Gokhale announced the news to me with great joy. These two Ministers had given other promises as well. As, however, we are considering only the question of indenture, I restrict myself here to this part of his meeting with the Union Government. The Parliament commenced its sittings. Gokhale had left South Africa by then and the Indians there discovered that the £3 tax was not to be repealed. To be sure, General Smuts had made a lukewarm effort to bring round the Natal members; in my judgement, however, he had not done all that he should have. The Indian community informed the Union Government that the latter had bound itself before Gokhale to repeal the tax and that, therefore if the tax was not repealed, it would be included among the issues on which they had been offering satyagraha since 1906. At the same time, Gokhale was informed telegraphically. He approved of this step. The Union Government ignored the warning given by the Indian community. Everyone knows what followed. 40,000 indentured Indians started satyagraha, went on strike and endured hardships past all bearing. Quite a few of them were killed. Ultimately, however, the promise given to Gokhale was fulfilled and the tax was repealed.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Dharmatma Gokhale

[1] By the Indians' Relief Act of 1914; *vide* Vol. XII.

62. SPEECH AT BIHAR STUDENTS' CONFERENCE[1]

[BHAGALPUR,
1917]

You have as it were chained me to you by inviting me to preside over this session of the Students' Conference. For twenty-five years, I have been in close contact with students. It was in South Africa that I first came to know some. While in England, I always maintained contact with other students. After returning to India, I have been meeting students all over the country. They show me unbounded love. By inviting me to preside over this meeting today and permitting me to speak in Hindi and conduct the proceedings, too, in Hindi, you, students, have given me evidence of your love. I shall think myself fortunate indeed if I can prove myself worthy of this love and be of some service to you. You have shown great wisdom in deciding to carry on the proceedings of this Conference in the regional language of the province—which also happens to be our national language. I congratulate you, and hope that you will continue this practice.

We have been guilty of disrespect to our mother tongue. I am sure we shall have to pay heavily for this act of sin. It has raised a wall of separation between us and our families. All those who are present at this Conference will bear witness to this fact. We do not and cannot explain to our mothers anything of what we learn. We do not and cannot give the benefit of our knowledge to others in our families. One will never find this sad state of affairs in an English family. In England and in other countries where education is imparted through the mother tongue, students, when they return home, discuss with their parents what they learn at school; the servants in the home, and others too, become familiar with it. Thus, the other members of the family also benefit from what the children learn at school. We, on the other hand, leave behind in the school what we learn there. Knowledge, like air, can circulate in no time. But, as a miser keeps his wealth buried in the ground, so we keep our learning to ourselves and others, therefore, do not share in its benefits. Disrespect to the mother

[1] This is based on *True Education* and a Gujarati version of the speech, the original Hindi report not being available. A portion of the speech was also reproduced in *Mahatma Gandhi* in Marathi.

tongue is as reprehensible as disrespect to one's mother. No one who is guilty of it deserves to be called a patriot. We hear many people saying that our languages are not rich enough in words to express our highest thinking. Gentlemen, this is no fault of the language. It is for us to develop and enrich our language. There was a time when English was in the same condition [as our lansuages]. It progressed because the British made progress and strove to develop their language. If we fail to develop our languages, holding that English alone can help us to cultivate and express higher thoughts, there is not the least doubt that we shall continue to be slaves for ever. So long as our languages do not acquire the power to express all our thinking and remain incapable of serving as the medium of communication for the various sciences, the nation will not get modern knowledge. It is self-evident :

1. that the entire body of our people need this knowledge;
2. that it will never be possible for all our people to understand English;
3. that, if only an English-educated individual can acquire new knowledge, it is impossible for all the people to have it.

This means that, if the first two propositions are correct, there is no hope for the masses. For this position, however, the blame does not lie with the languages. Tulsidas was able to express his divine ideas just in Hindi. There are not many books in the world to equal his *Ramayana*. A great patriot like Bharat Bhushan Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who, though a house-holder, has sacrificed his all for the country, has no difficulty in expressing himself in Hindi. He commands silvery English, but his speeches in Hindi have the brilliance of gold, like the current of the Ganga blazing like gold in sunshine as it pours down from lake Manasa. I have heard some Maulavis delivering their sermons. They find it easy enough to express their most profound ideas in their mother tongue. The language of Tulsidas is perfect, immortal. If we cannot express our thoughts in the speech which was his, surely the fault is ours.

The reason why we cannot do so is clear: the medium of education is English. All of us can help in getting this serious anomaly removed. I feel students can petition the Government, respectfully, on this matter. There is another remedy which they can simultaneously adopt, and that is, to translate what they learn at school into Hindi, share their knowledge with others in their homes, and pledge themselves to use only their mother tongue in their intercourse with one another. I cannot bear to see one

Bihari corresponding with another Bihari in English. I have heard thousands of Englishmen talking to one another. Some of them know other languages, but I have never heard two Englishmen talking in any foreign language among themselves. The inordinate folly that we are guilty of in India has no parallel in the history of the world.

A *Vedantist* poet has said that learning without thinking is useless. But owing to the reasons mentioned above, students' lives seem to be almost bankrupt of thought. They have lost all spirit and energy, are devoid of originality and most of them appear listless and apathetic.

I do not dislike English; its riches are infinite. It is the language of administration and is rich with the wealth of knowledge. All this notwithstanding, I hold that it is not necessary for every Indian to learn it. But of this, I do not wish to speak more here. Students have been learning English and they have no option but to do so till some other system is devised and the present schools undergo a revolution. I shall, therefore, end this all-important subject of the mother tongue here, merely saying in conclusion that in their dealings with one another, and whenever possible, people should use only their mother tongue and that others, besides students, who are present here should strive their utmost to make the mother tongue the medium of education.

As I have earlier pointed out, most of the students look listless and devoid of energy. Many of them have asked me what they should do, how they could serve the country and what they had best do to earn their living. I have the impression that they are most anxious about this last. Before answering these questions, it is necessary to consider what the true aim of education is. Huxley has said that education should aim at building character. Our seers aver that, if a man, though well-versed in the Vedas and the shastras, fails to realize the Self and to make himself worthy of liberation from all bonds, all his learning will have been in vain. They have also said: "He who has known the Self knows all." Self-realization is possible even without knowledge of letters. Prophet Mahomed was illiterate. Jesus Christ never went to school. But it would be foolhardy to assert, therefore, that these great souls had not attained self-realization. Though they never went to our schools and colleges to take any examination, we revere them. They had all that learning and knowledge could bring. They were mahatmas. If, following their example in blind imitation of one another, we leave off attending school, we shall get nowhere, to be sure. But we, too, can attain knowledge

of the Self only by cultivating good character. What is character, however? What are the hall-marks of a virtuous life? A virtuous man is one who strives to practise truth, non-violence, *brahmacharya*, non-possession, non-stealing, fearlessness and such other rules of conduct. He will give up his life rather than truth. He will choose to die rather than kill. He will rather suffer himself than make others suffer. He will be as a friend even to his wife and entertain no carnal thoughts towards her. Thus the man of virtue practises *brahmacharya* and tries to conserve, as well as he can, the ultimate source of energy in the body. He does not steal, nor take bribes. He does not waste his time nor that of others. He does not accumulate wealth needlessly. He does not seek ease and comfort and does not use things he does not really need but is quite content to live a simple life. Firm in the belief that "I am the immortal spirit and not this perishable body and that none in this world can ever kill the spirit", he casts out all fear of suffering of mind and body and of worldly misfortunes and refusing to be held down even by an emperor, goes on doing his duty fearlessly.

If our schools never succeed in producing this result, the students, the system of education and the teachers—all three must share the blame. It is, however, in the students' own hands to make good the want of character. If they are not anxious to develop character, neither teachers nor books will avail them. Thus, as I have said earlier, we must first understand the aim of education. A student who desires to cultivate and build character will learn how to do so from any good book on the subject. As Tulsidas has said:

> The Lord of Creation has made all things in this world, animate and inanimate, an admixture of good and evil. But a good man selects the good and rejects the evil even as the fabled swan is said to help himself to milk leaving out water.[1]

Being devoted to Rama, Tulsidas beheld him even in the image of Krishna. Some of our students attend Bible classes as required by rules but they remain innocent of the teaching of the Bible. One who reads the *Gita* with the intention of discovering errors in it may well succeed in doing so. But to him who desires liberation, the *Gita* shows the surest way thereto. Some people see nothing but imperfection in the *Koran-e-Sharif*, others, by meditating over it, fit themselves to cross the ocean of this earthly life. But I am afraid that most of the students never think as to the real aim of

[1] This has been quoted from the *Ramayana*.

education. They attend school merely because that is the normal thing to do. Some do so in order to be able to obtain employment later on. In my humble opinion, to think of education as a means of earning a living betrays an unworthy disposition of mind. The body is the means of earning a living, while the school is a place for building character. To regard the latter as the means of fulfilling one's bodily needs is like killing a buffalo for a small piece of hide. The body should be maintained through bodily work. How can the *atman*, the spirit, be employed for this purpose? "Thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow"—this is a *mahavakya* of Jesus Christ. The *Gita* also seems to say the same. About 99 per cent of the people in this world follow this law and live without fear. "He who has given the teeth will also give the feed" is indeed a true saying. But it is not for the lazy and indolent. Students had better know from the very start that they will have to earn their living through bodily labour and not be ashamed of manual work to that end. I do not mean that all of us should always be plying the hoe. But it is necessary to understand that there is nothing wrong in plying the hoe to earn one's living even though one may be engaged in some other avocation, and that labourers are in no way inferior to us. One who has accepted this as a principle and an ideal, will reveal himself as a man of pure and exceptional character in the way he does his work, no matter what profession he follows. Such a man will not be the slave of wealth; rather, wealth will be his slave. If I am right in this, students will have to acquire the habit of doing physical labour. I have said this for the benefit of those who look upon education as the means of earning their living.

Students who attend school without taking thought as to the true aim of education, should first make sure what it should be. Such a student may resolve this very day that, henceforth, he will regard school as a place for building character. I am sure that he will effect a change for the better in his character in the course of a month and that his companions will also bear witness to his having done so. The shastras assert that we become what we think.

Many students feel that it is not necessary to make any special effort for health. However, regular exercise is absolutely necessary for the body. What can be expected of a student who is not well-equipped in health? Just as milk cannot be held in a paper container, so also education is not likely to remain for long in the paper-like bodies of our students. The body is the abode of the spirit and, therefore, holy like a place of pilgrimage. We must see that it is well protected. Walking regularly and energetically for an

hour and a half in the morning and for the same period in the evening in open air keeps it healthy and the mind fresh. The time thus spent is not wasted. Such exercise, coupled with rest, will invigorate both the body and the intellect, enabling one to learn things more quickly. I think games like cricket have no place in a poor country like India. We have a number of inexpensive games of our own which afford innocent joy.

The daily life of the student should be above reproach. He alone can experience true delight whose mind is pure. Indeed, to ask such a man to seek delight in worldly pleasures is to deprive him of the real delight which is his. He who has resolved to rise does indeed rise. Ramachandra, in his innocence, wished for the moon and he got it.

From one point of view, the world seems to be an illusion; from another, it seems real enough. For students, the world does indeed exist, for it is they who have to strive for great achievement in it. He who declares the world to be illusory without knowing what that really means, indulges in pleasures as the fancy takes him and then claims to have renounced the world, is welcome to call himself a sannyasi but in reality he is a deluded man.

This brings me to the subject of dharma. Where there is no dharma, there can be neither knowledge nor wealth, nor health, nor anything else. Where there is no dharma, life is devoid of all joy, is mere emptiness. We have had to go without instruction in dharma; we are in much the same position as the bridegroom's party at a wedding without the bridegroom. Students cannot have innocent joy without a knowledge of dharma. That they may have such joy, it is necessary for them to study the shastras, to reflect over their teaching and bring their conduct in comformity with their ideals. Smoking a cigarette the first thing in the morning or idle gossip does good to nobody. Nazir has said that, even the sparrows as they twitter, sing the name of the Lord morning and evening, when we are still lying in our beds full-length. It is the duty of every student to acquire the knowledge of dharma in any manner he can. Whether or not dharma is taught in schools, it is my prayer to students who have assembled here that they introduce its essential principles in their life. What exactly is dharma? In what manner can instruction in religion be imparted? This is not the place for a discussion of this subject. But I shall give you this practical advice, based on my own experience, that you should take to the *Ramacharitamanasa* [of Tulsidas] and the *Bhagavad Gita* in love and reverence. You have a real jewel in the latter; seize it. But see that you study these two books in

order to learn the secret of dharma. The seers who wrote these works did not set out to write history but only to teach dharma and morals. Millions of people read these books and lead pure lives. They read them with a guileless heart and live in this world full of innocent joy. It never occurs to them even in a dream to ask whether or not Ravana was a historical figure or whether they might not kill their enemies as Rama killed Ravana. Even when face to face with enemies, they pray for Ramachandra's protection and remain unafraid. Tulsidas, the author of the *Ramayana*, had nothing but compassion by way of a weapon. He desired to kill none. He who creates, destroys. Rama was God; He had created Ravana and so had the right to kill him. When any of us becomes God, he may consider whether he is fit to have the power to destroy. I have ventured to say this by way of introduction to these great books. I was, myself, a sceptic once and lived in fear of being destroyed. I have grown out of that stage and become a believer. I have thought it fit here to describe the influence which these books have had on me. For Muslim students, the *Koran* is the best book in this respect. I would counsel them as well that they study this book in a spirit of devotion. They should understand its true message. I feel, too, that both Hindus and Muslims should study each other's religious scriptures with due respect and try to understand them.

From this most absorbing subject, I shall pass on to a topic of more worldly interest. It is often asked whether it is proper for students to take part in politics. I will let you know my opinion about it without going into the reasons. Politics has two aspects, theoretical study and practical activity. It is essential that students be introduced to the former, but it is harmful for them to concern themselves with the latter. They may attend political meetings or the sessions of the Congress in order to learn the science of politics. Such gatherings are useful as object-lessons. Students should have complete freedom to attend them and every effort should be made to get the recent ban on them removed. Students may not speak or vote at such meetings but may serve as volunteers if that does not interfere with their studies. No student can afford to miss an opportunity of serving Malaviyaji if one comes his way. Students should keep away from party politics. They should remain detached and cultivate respect for the leaders of the nation. It is not for them to judge the latter. Students easily respond to excellences of character, they adore them. They say it is the duty of students to look upon elders with reverence and respect their words. This is well said. He who has not learnt to respect others cannot hope for

respect for himself. An attitude of insolence ill becomes students. In this respect, an unusual situation has come about in India. Older folk are careless how they behave, or fail to maintain their dignity. What are the students to do in these circumstances? As I imagine, a student should have regard for dharma. Such a student, when faced with a moral dilemma, should recall the instance of Prahlad. Placed in circumstances in which this boy respectfully disobeyed the commands of his father, we can act in like manner towards elders resembling the latter. But any disrespect shown to them beyond this will be wrong. It will ruin the community. An elder is so not merely by virtue of his age, but by virtue of the knowledge, experience and wisdom which age brings. Where these are absent, the elder's position depends simply on his age. Nobody, however, worships age as such.

Another question is: How can students serve the country? The simple answer is that a student should study well, safeguarding his health meanwhile and cherishing the aim of using the fruits of his study in the service of the country. I am quite sure he will thereby serve his country. By living a purposeful life and taking care to be unmindful of our own interests and to work for others, we can achieve much with little effort. I want to tell you of one task of this kind. You must have seen my letter in the newspapers about the difficulties of third-class passengers. I suppose most of you travel third. These passengers spit in the compartment; they also spit out the remains of betel leaves and tobacco which they chew right in the carriage, and likewise throw the skins of bananas, etc., and other leavings on the floor of the carriage; they are careless in the use of the latrine and foul it. They smoke *bidis* and cigarettes without any regard for the convenience of fellow-passengers. We can explain to the other passengers in our compartment the harm that results from their dirtying the place. Most passengers respect students and listen to them. They should not then miss these excellent opportunities of explaining the rules of hygiene to the masses. The eatables sold at stations are dirty. It is the duty of students, when they find the things dirty, to draw the attention of the traffic manager to the fact, whether he replies or no. And take care that you write to him in Hindi. When he receives many such letters, he will be forced to heed them. This is easy work to do but it will yield important results.

I have spoken about the habits of chewing betel leaves and tobacco. In my humble opinion, these habits are both harmful and unclean. Most of us, men and women, have become their slaves. We must be free of this slavery. A stranger visiting India

will surely think that we are always eating some thing or the other. That the betel leaf, possibly, helps to digest food may be conceded, but food eaten in the proper quantity and manner is digested without any help from things like the betel leaf. Moreover, it does not have even an agreeable taste. And tobacco chewing must be given up as well. Students should always practise self-control. It is also necessary to consider the habit of smoking. Our rulers have set a bad example in this respect. They smoke cigarettes anywhere and everywhere. This has led us to consider smoking a fashion, and to turn our mouths into chimneys. Many books have been written to show that smoking is harmful. We call this age *Kaliyuga*. Christians believe that Jesus Christ will come again when selfishness, immorality, addiction to drugs and drink, etc., become rife. I shall not consider to what extent we may accept this as true. But I do feel that the world has been suffering a great deal from evils such as drinking, smoking, addiction to opium, *ganja*, hemp and so on. All of us are caught in this snare and so we cannot truly measure the magnitude of its unhappy consequences. It is my prayer that you, the students, keep away from them.

This Conference has entered its seventeenth year. The speeches of the Presidents in previous years were sent to me. I have gone through them. What is the object behind arranging these speeches? If it is that you may learn something from them, ask yourselves what you have learnt. If it is just to hear a beautiful flow of English words and enhance the prestige of the Conference, I feel sorry for you. I take it that these speeches are arranged with the idea that you may learn something from them and put it into practice. How many of you followed Smt. Besant's advice and adopted the Indian mode of dress, simplified your food habits and gave up unclean talk or acted on Prof. Jadunath Sarkar's advice and spent your vacations in teaching the poor, free of charge? I can put many questions. I do not ask for a reply. You may answer these questions to your own conscience. The worth of your learning will be judged by your actions. Stuffing your brains with the contents of hundreds of books may bring its reward but action is of much greater value by far. One's stock of learning is of no more value than the action it leads to. The rest is an unnecessary burden. I would, therefore, always request you and urge you to practise what you learn and what appears to you to be right. That is the only way to progress.

[From Gujarati]

Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti

63. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

SABARMATI,
[End of *1917*]

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have been waiting for your letter. Let me know your daily programme. Give me news about your health and that of Chhotalal and Surendra. Send me a sample of cloth woven there. What work is Avantikabehn doing in the women's school?

As to news from here, what can I write to you now? Mahadev has been flooding you with news.

The Hindi teacher has returned. I believe our school will almost reach perfection. At any rate, no effort will have been spared. We have purchased another piece of land.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Chi. Chhaganlal is now staying with Anasuyabehn.

[PPS.]

I received your letter after the above was written. I am very much pleased with what you have said. I am equally dissatisfied with your handwriting. Do please improve it. I am constantly worried about your cough. The cough has got to go. Do you breathe sufficiently deeply? Whenever you have cough, try salt-free diet for a couple of days. You should dispense with milk and ghee also and subsist on porridge and vegetables only. By this means your body will be rid of all impurities and will begin to function as before. But the main thing is that the root cause of cough should be removed. To this end do your best when you are not actually suffering from it. The best means is correct breathing. Do not breathe perfunctorily. Do you keep your mouth closed and head uncovered while asleep?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2026

64. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*

AHMEDABAD,
January 1, 1918

TO
J. L. MAFFEY, C.I.E., I.C.S.
PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY
DELHI

[DEAR MR MAFFEY,]

It grieves me to have to worry His Excellency in the midst of his many and onerous engagements. But I think that I am rendering a service in writing this letter. It is needless to say that I have been keenly following the agitation for the release of Messrs Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. I met their mother during my stay in Calcutta, and I ascertained the position of the brothers from her. She gave me the fullest assurance that her sons were in no way disloyal to the British Raj, and that in the scheme of Reform they contemplated permanent retention of the British connection. I have been attending the sessions of the Muslim League held there and I have moved freely among the leading Muhammadans. It is my firm opinion that the continued internment of the two brothers and the refusal to discharge them is creating greater and greater dissatisfaction and irritation from day to day. The Muhammadans, and also the Hindus for that matter, bitterly resent the internment. I am sure that it is not a healthy feeling. There is undoubted unrest among the Muhammadans. Discharge of the two brothers will, I am sure, greatly mitigate it. It will not remove it entirely so long as the war lasts. I had the privilege of supporting the resolution passed at the League about the release of the brothers.[1] The audience were weeping whilst their mother's address was being recited.

I am prepared to give due assurances to the Government about their future conduct. I feel that, in order to be able to live a healthy public life, either the brothers should be discharged or should be properly tried and convicted. I recognize the danger at the present moment of having a public trial and all it means. But I am certain that the continued imprisonment is no less dangerous. I there-

[1] This was at the 1917 session of the Muslim League in Calcutta.

63. *LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

SABARMATI,
[End of *1917*]

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have been waiting for your letter. Let me know your daily programme. Give me news about your health and that of Chhotalal and Surendra. Send me a sample of cloth woven there. What work is Avantikabehn doing in the women's school?

As to news from here, what can I write to you now? Mahadev has been flooding you with news.

The Hindi teacher has returned. I believe our school will almost reach perfection. At any rate, no effort will have been spared. We have purchased another piece of land.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Chi. Chhaganlal is now staying with Anasuyabehn.

[PPS.]

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BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2026

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AHMEDABAD,
January 1, 1918

TO
J. L. MAFFEY, C.I.E., I.C.S.
PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY
DELHI

[DEAR MR MAFFEY,]

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I am prepared to give due assurances to the Government about their future conduct. I feel that, in order to be able to live a healthy public life, either the brothers should be discharged or should be properly tried and convicted. I recognize the danger at the present moment of having a public trial and all it means. But I am certain that the continued imprisonment is no less dangerous. I there-

[1] This was at the 1917 session of the Muslim League in Calcutta.

fore suggest that I should be allowed to go to Chindwara and visit the brothers. I would get from them a public declaration of their loyalty, on the strength of which they may, in my humble opinion, be discharged without risk of public peace being in any way imperilled.

I may add that I know the brothers well. They are intensely devoted to their religion and equally devoted to India. I make bold to say that they will not make to me a statement which they do not fully intend to carry out. I hope, therefore, that the permission I have requested will be granted me. Will you kindly place my request before His Excellency? I need hardly say that I should be pleased to run down to Delhi if my presence is required. My address up to the 10th instant will be Ahmedabad and Motihari, Champaran from the 13th.

Yours sincerely,

N. A. I.: Home, Political (Deposit): January 1918, No. 31; also from a photostat of the office copy in Gandhiji's hand: S.N. 6424

65. *LETTER TO BHAGWANJI MEHTA*

MOTIHARI,
Magsar Vad 14 [January 1, 1918]

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

The problem of Kathiawad is all the time in my mind.[1] I am looking out for an opportunity. I don't propose to associate myself with the activities of the Cutch-Kathiawad Mandal. I think they are premature. I have told the organisers as much.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 3026. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The addressee, evidently, had been in touch with Gandhiji concerning the Viramgam customs cordon and other Kathiawad problems; *vide* "Letter to Bhagwanji Mehta", November 1, 1917.

66. *SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD MEETING*[1]

AHMEDABAD,
January 1, 1918

We meet here today on a matter which is important because it is but an aspect of swaraj. In saying this, we are guilty of no exaggeration. Swaraj means rule over oneself. A meeting which asks whether the Ahmedabad Municipality is able to manage its affairs well is surely a meeting in the cause of swaraj. The subject to be discussed at this meeting has a bearing on public health. Air, water and grains are the three chief kinds of food. Air is free to all, but, if it is polluted, it harms our health. Doctors say that bad air is more harmful than bad water. Inhalation of bad air is harmful by itself and this is the reason we [sometimes] need change of air. Next comes water. We are generally very careless about it. If we were to be sufficiently careful about air, water and food, the plague would never make its appearance among us. Some parts of Ahmedabad have been experiencing difficulties about water during the last eight years. For these three months, the whole city has been in difficulty, and we have assembled here to protest against this to the Collector of Ahmedabad, the Commissioner of the Northern Division and the Municipal Commissioner. From now on we must take up the effort to secure water. Councillors are servants of the people and we have a right to question them and, if they fail to discharge their responsibilities properly, even to ask them to resign. Under one of the sections of the [Municipal] Act, the Municipal Commissioner is appointed by the Government. We are also entitled to call the Municipal Commissioner and the Municipal Engineer to account; we have assembled here to take even further steps, if necessary. The larger the attendance at a meeting like this, discussing an issue of public importance, the weightier will be its protest. I should like to request you all not to rest till you have succeeded in this effort. If we approach every problem as seriously as we would a task of the highest importance, we are bound to succeed. We have the right to demand our money back.[2]

[1] The meeting was called to protest against insufficient and irregular supply of water. Gandhiji presided.

[2] Following are the remarks made by Gandhiji after the main resolution of the meeting had been moved and discussed.

We must protest, for, otherwise, the officials will never know what we suffer; nor need we wait till the new elections, as it is quite likely that they may be delayed by a year.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 13-1-1918

67. *LETTER TO A PUBLIC WORKER*

[After *January 11, 1918*]

I liked very much what you did. It did not take the Commissioner[1] more than a moment to come out in his true colours. I am not being censorious but I say it for your future guidance that, when the Commissioner refused to see all the members of the deputation, the secretaries would have done well, out of self-respect, to withdraw[2] ....Mr. Pratt's error will make things easier for the people. If he wants to ignore the Gujarat Sabha, let him.[3] If you are strong enough, stand by the people fearlessly and advise them not to pay the assessment. If you are arrested in consequence, you will have done your duty. . . .Don't worry about the results. This is what satyagraha means. You may be sure this is the only way to win the fullest respect for ourselves. Quite likely, we may not succeed in the immediate present. It is our supreme duty to take every occasion to show in action the wonderful power of satyagraha.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

[1] This was the Commissioner of the Northern Division, F. G. Pratt.

[2] Excessive rainfall in 1917 had caused failure of crops in the Kheda district. The Gujarat Sabha, a body established in 1884 to represent people's grievances to the Government, had supported the peasants' demand for postponement of land revenue assessment. On January 1, the Sabha wrote to the Bombay Government urging exemption in some cases and postponement in others. Gandhiji visited Ahmedabad and, after a study of the problem, advised the Sabha, of which he was President, to ask the people to suspend payment till a reply had been received from the Bombay Government. He also suggested to the Sabha to lead a deputation to the Commissioner. On January 10, the Sabha sought an appointment. When the deputation called at the office of the Commissioner, he agreed to see only the Secretaries, Krishnalal Desai and G. V. Mavlankar. Gandhiji was informed of this by telegram.

[3] During the interview, the Commissioner had stated that he might recommend to Government that the Sabha be declared an illegal body.

68. LETTER TO A PUBLIC WORKER

[After *January 11, 1918*]

I have your letter and telegram. I was fully reassured by them. Do not back out of the task you have undertaken. In fact you don't need me or anyone else. Those who are unable to pay the land revenue will remain so, whether or no the Government admits their inability. Why should they pay it, then? This is all you have to explain to the people. Even if only one person remains firm, he will have won the battle. From this, we shall be able to raise a new crop. Go ahead fearlessly.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

69. REPLY TO TEACHERS' DEPUTATION[1]

[SABARMATI,
Before *January 13, 1918*]

To those of you who would like to have jobs, I can at present offer two kinds of work: (1) Construction work on a building for this Satyagraha Ashram is about to begin. If anyone desiring employment agrees to work on this, I shall very much appreciate his help. I can pay him Rs. 15/- p.m. I feel, too, that, if they help to build the Ashram with their labour, they will not only earn much credit for themselves, but also raise the prestige of the Ashram. (2) I can also arrange that those of you who would like to promote swadeshi industries are taught hand-weaving free of charge. I can do more: supply the required yarn and help to market the cloth woven. Those who are so inclined may therefore let me know. I think this is probably the best way of combining self-interest with service to the country.

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 13-1-1918

[1] The teachers, as reported by the paper, represented to Gandhiji that they had resigned their jobs with effect from January 1, 1918, and that some of them wanted, with his help, to start indigenous industries.

70. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING

MOTIHARI,
January 13, 1918[1]

MY DEAR ESTHER,

Having been wandering about, I have not been able to reply to your letters. I was in Calcutta, thence went to Bombay and the Ashram and returned only yesterday. I had varied experiences which I cannot describe for want of time.

To say that perfection is not attainable on this earth is to deny God. The statement about impossibility of ridding ourselves of sin clearly refers to a stage in life. But we need not search scriptures in support of the assertion. We do see men constantly becoming better under effort and discipline. There is no occasion for limiting the capacity for improvement. Life to me would lose all its interest if I felt that I *could* not attain perfect love on earth. After all, what matters is that our capacity for loving ever expands. It is a slow process. How shall you love the men who thwart you even in well-doing? And yet that is the time of supreme test.

I hope that you are now enjoying greater peace of mind. Let your love for the Ashram be a source[2] of strength in your attempt to do your duty there[3]. The Ashram is undoubtedly intended to teach us to do our assigned task with the utmost attention and with cheerfulness. There is meaning in our wishes (however pure) not being fulfilled. Not our will but His will be done.

I hope you are making progress in your Tamil lessons.

Did you receive from Messrs Natesan & Co. a book they have brought out containing my speeches and writings? I am sending you a copy of my speech in Calcutta on Social Service.[4]

With love.

Yours,
BAPU

My Dear Child, pp. 24-5

[1] The date, November 13, 1918, assigned in Mahadev Desai's published diary, is incorrect.

[2] The original has "service", obviously a misprint.

[3] Tirukoilur, in the South, where Esther Faering was at the time

[4] *Vide* "Address at All-India Social Service Conference", 31-12-1917.

71. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL CHINAIWALA

[MOTIHARI,]
Posh Sud 1 [*January 13, 1918*]

BHAISHRI CHIMANLAL (CHINAIWALA),

I have your letter. It is our duty to help every class of workers. I have no doubt about this. I have little faith in what goes under the name of "co-operation". I think our first task is to make a careful survey of the conditions of the working class. What does the worker earn? Where does he live? In what condition? How much does he spend? How much does he save? What debts does he incur? How many children has he? How does he bring them up? What was he previously? What brought about the change in his life? What is his present condition? It does not seem proper at all to start a co-operative society straightway, without finding answers to all these questions. It is necessary that we go into the midst of the working class. If we do, we can solve a number of problems in a very short time. For the moment, I should just advise you to mix with the workers and make yourself familiar with their condition. More when we meet.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

72. LETTER TO E. L. L. HAMMOND

MOTIHARI,
January 14, 1918

TO
E. L. L. HAMMOND, ESQ.
SECRETARY
PROVINCIAL RECRUITING BOARD
BIHAR AND ORISSA

DEAR MR. HAMMOND,

You will forgive me for not replying earlier to your letter of blank date in December.[1] The fact is that I have been travelling out of Champaran. I returned only on the 12th instant. My

[1] The letter as reproduced in *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran* bears the date December 18. For the text of the letter, *vide* Appendix VII.

difficulty just now is that whilst the agrarian position remains uncertain, I would make no headway. The Agrarian Bill is now before the Council. My way will be clearer after it is passed. I shall then try to follow out your suggestion and see what can be done.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

73. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI[1]

MOTIHARI,
January 14, 1918

I think we shall only be doing an injustice in placing this translation before the people. The expenditure, therefore, has been wasted. But there is nothing else we can honestly do. For the present, this is all we need decide. Lay aside the translation and do not get it bound. We may publish the second and third parts as Vol. I....[2] A translation in Gujarati should be simple, natural, free from grammatical errors and worthy of a place beside the classics of literature. I don't find a single one of these qualities in this translation. . . .I see that you have taken great pains over the proofs. We should take care to see, as a matter of principle, that we don't have to give errata and that no errors remain.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi

74. LETTER TO RAMBHAU GOGATE

[MOTIHARI,]
Posh Sud 2 [January 14, 1918]

BHAI RAMBHAU,

I have your postcard. It will be all right if you pay me the amount in Indore.[3]

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 3615. Courtesy: Bhai Kotwal

[1] Gandhiji's sister's son. He brought out a selection of Gandhiji's writings in Gujarati under the title *Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti.*

[2] Some lines are omitted here in the source.

[3] Gandhiji was to address the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan there.

75. LETTER TO L. F. MORSHEAD

MOTIHARI,
January 15, 1918

TO
L. F. MORSHEAD
COMMISSIONER
TIRHUT DIVISION
BIHAR

DEAR MR. MORSHEAD,

I have your letter[1] of the 14th instant. I have now carefully gone through the Bill. I see that I must revise the view that I took of Mr. Kennedy's amendment[2] in my conversation with you. I fear that his amendment will not meet the case if it is to cover the whole of section 3. I can accept Amendment marked A in place of clause 2, section 3. Mr. Kennedy's proviso marked B by you is wholly unacceptable. Clause 1 of section 3 is necessary for the repeal of contractual *tinkathia*[3]. Section 5 subject to the amendment suggested by me in my letter to the Government, dated 19th December, is necessary to give effect to the other recommendation of the Committee beyond recognition of *khuski*[4] contracts. My position is clear. I would consider pledging of a tenant's land for the growing of particular crops as a revival of *tinkathia*. Mr. Kennedy's effort, if I have understood him correctly, is devoted to securing such pledging. Between these two extremes there is no meeting ground.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

[1] *Vide* Appendix VIII (a). Morshead had met Gandhiji on January 14 and discussed the matter with him; *vide* Appendix VIII (b).

[2] For the text of this, *vide* Appendix VIII (a).

[3] This was a practice prevailing in the indigo-growing districts of Bihar. The landlords compelled their tenants to grow indigo, oats or sugarcane on three-twentieths of their holdings for paltry wages.

[4] The practice of enforcing unconditional indigo cultivation

76. LETTER TO "THE STATESMAN"

MOTIHARI,
January 16, 1918

TO
THE EDITOR
THE STATESMAN
[CALCUTTA]

SIR,

Mr. Irwin's latest letter published in your issue of the 12th instant[1] compels me to court the hospitality of your columns. So long as your correspondent confined himself to matters directly affecting himself, his misrepresentations did not much matter, as the real facts were as much within the knowledge of the Government and those who are concerned with the agrarian question in Champaran, as within mine. But in the letter under notice, he has travelled outside his jurisdiction as it were, and unchivalrously attacked one of the most innocent women walking on the face of the earth (and this I say although she happens to be my wife) and has unpardonably referred to a question of the greatest moment, I mean, the cow protection question, without taking the precaution, as behoves a gentleman, of ascertaining facts at first hand.

My address to the Gau Rakshini Sabha[2] he could have easily obtained upon application to me. This at least was due to me as between man and man. Your correspondent accuses me of "making a united attack on *Saheb log* (the landlords) who slaughter and eat cows daily". This presupposes I was addressing a comparatively microscopic audience of the planters' ryots. The fact is that the audience was composed chiefly of the non-ryot class. But I had in mind a much bigger audience, and not merely the few thousand hearers before me. I spoke under a full sense of my responsibility. The question of cow protection is, in my opinion, as large as the Empire to which Mr. Irwin and I belong. I know that he is a proud father of a young lad of twenty-four, who has received by his gallantry the unique honour of a colonelcy at his age. Mr. Irwin can, if he will, obtain a greater honour for him-

[1] Irwin's letter of January 8 was published actually on January 11; *vide* Appendix IX.

[2] *Vide* "Speech on Cow Protection, Bettiah", about October 9, 1917.

self by studying the cow question and taking his full share in its solution. He will, I promise, be then much better occupied than when he is dashing off his misrepresentations to be published in the Press and most unnecessarily preparing to bring 2,200 cases against his tenants for the sake of deriving the questionable pleasure of deeming me responsible for those cases.

I said at the meeting that the Hindus had no warrant for resenting the slaughter of cows by their Mahomedan brethren, who kill them from religious conviction, so long as they themselves were a party to the killing by inches of thousands of cattle who were horribly ill-treated by their Hindu owners, to the drinking of milk drawn from cows in the inhuman dairies of Calcutta, and so long as they calmly contemplated the slaughter of thousands of cattle in the slaughter-houses of India for providing beef for the European and Christian residents of India. I suggested that the first step towards procuring full protection for cows was to put their own house in order by securing absolute immunity from ill-treatment of their cattle by Hindus themselves, and then to appeal to the Europeans to abstain from beef-eating whilst resident in India, or at least to procure beef from outside India. I added that in no case could the cow-protection propaganda, if it was to be based upon religious conviction, tolerate a sacrifice of Mahomedans for the sake of saving cows, that the religious method of securing protection from Christians and Mahomedans alike was for Hindus to offer themselves a willing sacrifice of sufficient magnitude to draw out the merciful nature of Christians and Mahomedans. Rightly or wrongly, worship of the cow is ingrained in the Hindu nature and I see no escape from a most bigoted and sanguinary strife over this question between Christians and Mahomedans on the one hand and Hindus on the other except in the fullest recognition and practice by the Hindus of the religion of ahimsa, which it is my self-imposed and humble mission in life to preach. Let the truth be faced. It must not be supposed that Hindus feel nothing about the cow slaughter going on for the European. I know that their wrath is today being buried under the awe inspired by the English rule. But there is not a Hindu throughout the length and breadth of India who does not expect one day to free his land from cow slaughter. But contrary to the genius of Hinduism as I know it, he would not mind forcing, even at the point of the sword, either the Christian or the Mahomedan to abandon cow slaughter. I wish to play my humble part in preventing such a catastrophe and I thank Mr. Irwin for having provided me with an opportunity of inviting him and

your readers to help me in my onerous mission. The mission may fail to prevent cow slaughter. But there is no reason why by patient plodding and consistent practice it should not succeed in showing the folly, the stupidity and the inhumanity of committing the crime of killing a fellow human being for the sake of saving a fellow animal.

So much on behalf of the innocent cow. A word only for my innocent wife who will never even know the wrong your correspondent has done her. If Mr. Irwin would enjoy the honour of being introduced to her he will soon find out that Mrs. Gandhi is a simple woman, almost unlettered, who knows nothing of the two bazaars mentioned by him, even as I knew nothing of them until very recently and some time after the establishment of the rival bazaar referred to by Mr. Irwin. He will then further assure himself that Mrs. Gandhi has had no hand in its establishment and is totally incapable of managing such a bazaar. Lastly, he will at once learn that Mrs. Gandhi's time is occupied in cooking for and serving the teachers conducting the school established in the *dehat* (interior) in question, in distributing medical relief and in moving amongst the women of the *dehat* with a view to giving them an idea of simple hygiene. Mrs. Gandhi, I may add, has not learnt the art of making speeches or addressing letters to the Press.

As to the rest of the letter, the less said the better. It is so full of palpable misrepresentations that it is difficult to deal with them with sufficient self-restraint. I can only say that I am trying to the best of my ability to fulfil the obligation I hold myself under, of promoting good-will between planters and ryots, and if I fail, it would not be due to want of efforts on my part, but it would be largely, if not entirely, due to the mischievous propaganda Mr. Irwin is carrying on openly and some others *sub rosa* in Champaran in order to nullify the effect of the report published by the Agrarian Committee, which was brought into being - not as Mr. Irwin falsely suggests at my request—but by the agitation carried on, as your files would demonstrate, by Mr. Irwin and his friends of the Anglo-Indian Association. If he is wise, he will abide by his written word, voluntarily and after full discussion and deliberation, given by him at Ranchi.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

The Statesman, 19-1-1918

77. LETTER TO S. K. RUDRA

MOTIHARI,
January 16, 1918

DEAR MR. RUDRA,[1]

I am dictating this letter to Mr. Desai as, owing to an acute pain in the left side, I am disinclined to do much writing. What I want from you, if I can get it, is not a hastily written letter about the vernaculars, but a full, enthusiastic and eloquent plea for them which I can use for rousing the public to a sense of its duty in this matter. Why should you have teaching [in] the vernacular and answers in English? Why should every lad have to know English? Is it not enough if some men are specially trained in English in each Province so that they may diffuse among the nation through the vernaculars a knowledge of new discoveries and researches? So doing, our boys and girls will become saturated with the new knowledge and we may expect a rejuvenation such as we have never witnessed during the past sixty years. I feel more and more that, if our boys are to assimilate facts of different sciences, they will only do so if they receive their training through the vernaculars. No half measures will bring about this much needed reform. Until we attain this state of things, I fear that we shall have to let the Englishmen think for us and we must continue slavishly to imitate them. No scheme of self-government can avert the catastrophe if it does not involve this much needed change. If you feel with me, I want your letter expressing the above views in your own language.

I had a very nice time of it in Calcutta, but not in the Congress pandal.[2] It was all outside the pandal. I was enraptured to witness the "Post-Office"[3] performed by the Poet and his company. Even as I dictate this, I seem to hear the exquisitely sweet voice of the Poet and the equally exquisite acting on the part of the sick boy. Bengali music has for me a charm all its own. I did not have enough of it, but what I did have had a most soothing effect upon my nerves which are otherwise always on trial.

[1] Sushil Kumar Rudra; Principal, St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and a close associate and friend of C. F. Andrews

[2] The Congress was in session during December 29-31, 1917.

[3] A play by Tagore

You will be glad to learn that, at the Social Service Conference, I made full use of my privilege as President and as a lover of so much that is good in the Bengali life to speak strongly against Bengali provincialism.[1] The audience did not resent it. It seemed to appreciate my remarks. I am sending you a copy of my address which, of course, does not contain the personal appeal mentioned above.

I have not given you a tenth of my experiences, but Mr. Desai reminds me that I must give you one more. I attended a Humanitarian League meeting. There, too, I was the President and I felt that I should be untrue to myself and the audience if I did not touch upon the devilish worship going on at the Kalighat. I therefore spoke about it without mincing words.[2] I was watching the audience while I was speaking. I am unable to say whether I made any impression upon it. Anyway I eased my conscience by referring to the matter fairly fully. If I had sufficient fire in me, I would stand in front of the lane leading to the Ghat and stop every man and woman from blaspheming God in the name of religion.

I return your letter on the vernaculars to you to refresh your memory.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

78. *TELEGRAM TO GUJARAT SABHA*[1]

[MOTIHARI,
After *January 16, 1918*]

SHRIS PAREKH AND PATEL,[2] WHO MADE ENQUIRIES ON THE SPOT, MUST GIVE A CONVINCING REPLY BY ARGUMENT AND BY ILLUSTRATIONS. PRESS FOR AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION. THE MOVEMENT HAS STARTED FROM THE PEOPLE AND YOU SHOULD PROVE THAT THE INTERVENTION OF SHRIS PAREKH AND PATEL AND OF THE GUJARAT SABHA HAS BEEN AT THEIR INSTANCE. THAT AGRICULTURISTS WHO HAVE TO BORROW OR TO SELL THEIR CATTLE IN ORDER TO PAY LAND REVENUE SHOULD NOT DO SO IS AN ADVICE WHICH I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO GIVE. THE GOVERNMENT MAY DO WHAT IT LIKES. IF THE HARDSHIP IS GENUINE AND THE WORKERS SKILFUL, THEY CANNOT BUT ACHIEVE SUCCESS.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

[1] The Gujarat Sabha advised the Kheda farmers on January 10 to refrain from paying land revenue. This was criticised by the Collector of Kheda district in a statement on January 14: "The Collector has full authority either to recover land revenue or to grant postponement, and I have issued my final orders only after a careful investigation of the crops in the district. In some villages of the district, where I felt relief was necessary, I have issued orders giving postponement of a part of the land revenue. Land holders must now, therefore, pay up their land revenue and the outstanding *taqavi*. If, nevertheless, anyone influenced by the wrong advice which is being given to them refuses to pay up his land revenue dues, I shall be compelled to take stringent legal measures against him." This was followed by a statement from the Government of Bombay on January 16, which supported the Collector's action, questioned the *locus standi* of the Gujarat Sabha in Ahmedabad in advising the farmers of Kheda, described the issue of such advice as "thoughtless and mischievous" and asserted that the Government would not allow "any intervention in the normal work of the collection of land revenue dues" in the "rich and fertile district". On being telegraphically informed of this statement, Gandhiji sent this telegram to the Sabha.

[2] Gokuldas Parekh and Vithalbhai Patel who went to Nadiad on December 12 and visited about 20 villages in Kapadvanj and Thasra talukas and studied the problem first hand. They submitted a report to the Gujarat Sabha.

79. LETTER TO D. J. REID

MOTIHARI,
January 17, 1918

DEAR MR. REID[1],

I did not know whilst I had the privilege of working with you, what it meant for you to be on that Committee. I know now what risks you ran. I do not offer you my sympathy for I know that you are unaffected by the campaign of calumny Messrs Irwin and Jameson are leading. Public men who wish to work honestly can only rely upon the approbation of their own conscience. No other certificate is worth anything for them. May you have strength to bear the fire through which you are passing.

I hope you had a nice time in Ceylon.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 4447

80. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Posh Sud 5 [January 17, 1918]

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I have your letter. If Meva can stay by herself with me, I can arrange to have her here. The Doctor may send her in the company of some reliable person or with you. After leaving her here, you can go back.

There are four ladies working here, Narhari's wife, Mahadev's, Anandibai[2] (a widow) and Avantikabai. I propose to assign them to different villages. Three of them are even now in villages. Ba, too, is in a village working among the women there.

[1] General Secretary, Bihar Planters' Association and member, Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council; he served on the Champaran Enquiry Committee appointed on June 10, 1917, to go into the Indigo labourers' question.

[2] Originally from Mahila Ashram at Poona, she joined the team of social workers in Champaran; later, in February 1918, started teaching in the school at Bhitiharwa.

You have suffered long enough from the injury caused by the nail. I hope you are absolutely free from it now.

Ramdas has purposely joined the tailor's. He wants to earn a little and also have some experience of unpleasant conditions. He did not leave in a pique. I was pleased that he went. He will get seasoned. He does not expect and should not expect any monetary help from me.

The question you have asked arises because of the changes that have taken place in my life. If I had been, from the beginning, a poor man with no interest other than in the service of the country, nothing more would have been expected of me. I could then have brought up my children according to my ideals, and they, on their part, would have been free, on growing up, to follow a path different from mine. In that case, they would expect from me nothing more than my blessings. I could have claimed this right if I had always been a poor man; if so, I should be able to claim it even now. Parents may change their ideals; when they do, the children should either follow them or gently part company with them. Only if this happens can everyone enjoy swaraj.

When an employer becomes what you have pictured, the employee has the right to leave his service. He should only take care that the master is not put into difficulty immediately. If the employer becomes an outright brute, the employee may leave his service regardless of what may happen to the master's business. He may also give up service if others under the master behave that way. There cannot be, however, one single rule to fit all circumstances. One can decide only with reference to a given situation.

When a Kshatriya has lost all his weapons, he fights with his bare hands and feet and dies fighting. On this point, too, one cannot lay down an absolute rule. There may be occasions when, losing his weapons, the Kshatriya will surrender and then fight again after securing new ones.

It is not correct to say that the truth has been discovered in the West. One is right in holding that truth and non-violence are the same thing. The one includes the other. If anyone vowed to non-violence speaks or acts untruth, he will be violating his vow If a man dedicated to truth commits violence, he will sacrifice truth. Even if a man refuses to reply, out of fear, he will be violating the vow of non-violence.

If we think of Shri Krishna as the ground of all being and not as a human figure, all doubts will vanish. He is an imaginary figure, but He has so taken possession of the Hindu heart that He

exists in body more truly than we do. Of a certainty, Shri Krishna will live as long as Hinduism lives.

There is much more I can write, but I shall not now. Even this I have set down in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MEVA,

If you have the courage to stay with me by yourself, do come. I shall improve your health and you may try to be a daughter to me and so help me to forget the want of one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 5724. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

81. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Posh Sud 6 [*January 18, 1918*]

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I am dictating this letter to you and not writing it myself, for otherwise there may be none at all. You are right in what you say about things being dear. To keep oneself away from relishing food even while living in daily company with it is a great vow to observe. Only an exceptional man can do so and *moksha* is for such a man alone. We may, as yet, only make the attempt. Keep the vow as best as you can. I think I am myself unworthy at present to speak with any very great authority on this subject. Prof. Kripalani[1] went to jail the day before yesterday and we observed a fast. The joy I knew on that day is not mine today. I broke the fast yesterday and had fruits to eat; they were sweet enough, but I ate them without zest and so was full of joy; however, less [than on the previous day]. I know that, trying to find pleasure in food that is not particularly savoury, I ate too much today and in consequence I am ill at ease in my mind, not happy. Thus, despite the fact of my diet being limited to five articles [during the course of a day] and altogether devoid of the savours which

[1] J. B. Kripalani; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. XIII & XVII.

make food tasty, the palate continues to extract its pleasure and the *atman* suffers. If, at the age of 49 and despite this effort at discipline, I have not succeeded in bringing my palate fully under control, what may you do, in the prime of youth and living surrounded by all manner of dainties. I can guess the answer well enough. To be sure, it is my intense desire that you and other young men who have understood the importance of self-control in this matter and are endeavouring, in my company, to achieve it, may outdo me. You can. I have struggled long to attain complete mastery. More than this, I shall write when I am worthy enough to do so.

It is quite likely that earth will have no effect on a deep wound. Keep up patiently the treatment you are following, that of inserting a cloth plug. If you cannot manage the insertion well, take the Doctor's help. The wound should not remain unhealed for very long now.

You may put me any questions you like. I shall reply when I find the time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Mahadev Desai's hand, signed by Gandhiji: C. W. 5725. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

82. *LETTER TO K. V. MEHTA*

MOTIHARI,
January 18, 1918

DEAR KALYANBHAI,

I have your letter. I can see only two ways. One, the better of the two, is this : the woman should put her education to the right use and try to improve the husband to whom fate has joined her. Women have done this before now and, if this one shows such a spirit today, all concerned will soon be happy. She must be wise in spirit to succeed in this task. If she is not so well equipped, she should make bold and plainly refuse to go and live with her husband. If there is reason to fear pressure on her in her parents' home, she will have every right to leave it. In that case, some friend should give her shelter. If this cannot be done in a village, she may be removed from there. I should like you to put your friendship to some use by protecting the woman. Please try the better way first.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

83. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Posh Sud 8 [January 20, 1918]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I am likely to have a battle royal over Mahomed Ali. If India carries out my plan, the Government of India will be properly humbled. Hindus and Muslims, never united, will become so, mother cow will be safe and we shall hear the triumph of non-violence proclaimed all over the world. Before all this comes to pass, however, I shall have to go through an ordeal myself. A power which has till now brooked opposition from no Indian is sure to fight as if for its very life when defied by a handful of Indians. Its fury then will be almost unbearable. But I am resolved to face it all. I mention this to remind you to be careful that in the storm that will follow we do not lose, whether in our wisdom or folly, the money that we have received for the Ashram. I have already told you there should be nothing in my name, at any place. Keep everything in your name. Transfer everything standing in my name to yours. The receipt for the money which Revashankarbhai has deposited in the bank at Bombay is probably in our joint names, his and mine. My name in it should be replaced by yours. You should make your will to provide against accidents, nominating the Doctor your heir and executor. Your plan of work has been chalked out. You must devote yourself to weaving and agriculture. You should so train Santok[1] that she may join you whole-heartedly in this work. Simultaneously with this and in order that you may succeed in it, you have to address yourself to the almost superhuman task of moulding Radha[2] and Rukhi[3] to be ideal girls. For this, you will need to observe always the highest of dharma. Naturally enough, therefore, you will be daily advancing towards *moksha*, and so in this work your satyagraha and your patriotic services will find their consummation. All the money we have is for these two activities and for the National School. That will also continue to be the position in law. The amounts that will be transferred to your

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] & [3] Addressee's daughters

name will not become your property, but will be treated as donations in aid of our activities. But do not rely on my interpretation of the law. Consult Shri Krishnalal, Mavlankar and others. Drink deep the draught of love from anywhere and everywhere, like that cowherd[1] of Dwarka, no matter even if you have to steal the thing. The more you drink of it, the greater will be your bliss and you will have had your heart's desire. If the handloom, which they formerly worked in the pit, had been flourishing today and if we had been spinning all the yarn we require, we would not, with all this cotton available, have to face this terrible rise in the prices of cloth. Here people shiver in the cold for want of clothes. Every moment I realize the value of cloth. Either I have to supply myself with plenty of covering so that I may sleep outside and have oxygen, or for want of such covering suffocate in a box-like room, swallowing again my own carbonic acid gas. My only prayer, and my blessing as well, is that you may have the necessary strength to realize your aspirations and fulfil my hopes. In all that you do, please consult the Ashram inmates and the teachers of the National School. I hope to be there at the latest by the 17th or the 18th of February. But it occurred to me this morning that I had better write about all this immediately to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati original: C. W. 5726. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

84. LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY

MOTIHARI,
January 21, 1918

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

I thank you for your two letters.

I fear that probably I have failed to convey my full meaning in my letter.[2] Matters so delicate as the one regarding Messrs Ali brothers are least satisfactorily handled by correspondence. It would perhaps be better, if you think it advisable, that I should run down to Delhi and first have a chat with you and then, if it is considered necessary, I should wait on His Excellency. Will

[1] Shri Krishna

[2] *Vide* "Letter to J. L. Maffey", 1-1-1918.

you please consider my suggestion and let me know what you think about it?

Yours sincerely,

N. A. I.: Home, Political (Deposit): February 1918, No. 29

85. LETTER TO MESSRS LIENGIER & CO.

MOTIHARI (BIHAR),
January 21, 1918

MESSRS LIENGIER & CO.
MADURA

The method that I have adopted for reinstating those who have left off weaving is to supply them with yarn, at the lowest market rates, to buy out all the cloth they may manufacture, for cash, at the highest market rates, the yarn to be paid for in instalments, without interest, convenient to the weaver. This has enabled them to earn at the rate of about Rs. 17 per month. These weavers do not give their whole time to weaving and their manufacture is confined to the coarsest cloth. They do not want to aspire higher and what they earn is enough for their wants. But I know that a clever weaver manufacturing finer counts, with perhaps a little pattern-work, can make twenty-five rupees per month. Every weaver lost to the country is, in my opinion, so much national waste, and every weaver reinstated is so much national gain. Whatever the plan you may adopt, I would like you to keep me informed of your activity from time to time.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

86. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

MOTIHARI,
January 21, [1918]

DEAR GURUDEV,

For my forthcoming address before the Hindi Sammelan[1] at Indore, I am trying to collect the opinions of leaders of thought on the following questions:

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Hindi Sahitya Sammelan", 29-3-1918.

(i) Is not Hindi (as *Bhasha*[1] or Urdu) the only possible national language for inter-provincial intercourse and for all other national proceedings?

(ii) Should not Hindi be the language principally used at the forthcoming Congress?

(iii) Is it not desirable and possible to give the highest teaching in our schools and colleges through the vernaculars? And should not Hindi be made a compulsory second language in all our post-primary schools?

I feel that if we are to touch the masses and if national servants are to come in contact with the masses all over India, the questions set forth above have to be immediately solved and ought to be treated as of the utmost urgency. Will you kindly favour me with your reply, at your early convenience?[2]

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Mahadev Desai's hand: G.N. 2765

87. LETTER TO A FRIEND

[MOTIHARI,]
January 21, 1918

The question who should write a preface to a volume[3] of my speeches and writings, or whether there should be any preface at all, can be answered after I know the publisher's name and his motive. If the volume is to be brought out by a firm for making profit, it will need a preface by Sarojini[4]. If by a pious *Vaishnava*, to be sure he should approach Ranchhodbhai[5]. If a third party, who does not know me, comes across my writings and he wants someone to under-write sales, he should seek out a friend, that is Dr. Mehta. If you and Mathuradas are to father the volume, it would need no preface at all. At present, I am known all over as if I were one of the wild animals in the Felix Circus and, so, it will not be necessary

[1] Language

[2] Tagore wrote back: "Of course Hindi is the only possible national language for inter-provincial intercourse in India. But. . .I think we cannot enforce it for a long time to come."

[3] *Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti*, edited by Mathuradas Trikumji

[4] Sarojini Naidu, the poetess

[5] Ranchhodlal Patwari

to put a stamp on me except for the reasons mentioned above. Tl desire that, while the sea of my thoughts is yet in tide, as mar people as possible should be enabled to have a plunge in it withoi loss of time, is the only proper motive for bringing out a volum I am, of course, in love with these ideas so that I would natural desire that the largest number of people be given a chance to reè them. At present, therefore, I am also one of the sponsors of tl plan for publishing a volume. Where, then, is the need for a pr face? My life itself is the best preface. Those who can w read it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

88. LETTER TO REVENUE SECRETARY

MOTIHAI
January 24, 191

TO
THE SECRETARY TO
REVENUE DEPARTMENT
THE GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR AND ORISSA

The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narayan Sinha[2] has su plied me with the papers given to him about the Champaran Agr rian Bill. I note therein a memorandum submitted by the Champ ran members of the Bihar Planters' Association,[3] as also one frc the managers of the Sirnie Concern. These memoranda as al certain other papers call for a reply for the consideration of t Select Committee.

Before, however, offering my observations I wish to subn that, if it is at all the intention of the Government to make ma rial alterations in the Bill, a representative on behalf of the *raiy* should be appointed to the Council and should also be on the Sel Committee. And I feel that nobody is so capable of sufficien representing these interests as Babu Brajkishore Prasad or myse and I hope my submission will receive from the Government t attention it deserves.

[1] The original has 1917, which is obviously a misprint.

[2] Member of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. He was also on Select Committee to which the Champaran Agrarian Bill had been referred

[3] This was on January 5. *Vide* Appendix X.

In considering the provisions of the Bill, it is, in my humble opinion, of paramount importance for all concerned to remember that the Government have proclaimed to the *raiyats* their decision upon the Committee's recommendations.[1] It is respectfully suggested that the Bill is in fulfilment of the assurance issued to the *raiyats* in the said proclamation. The Bill, therefore, does not admit of any alteration in any material respect. As it is, owing to the acrimonious correspondence going on in the Press and all sorts of rumours set afloat by interested parties, the *raiyats* are becoming restive. *Bis dat qui cito dat* applies in the present instance with peculiar force. Any undue delay in passing the Bill may spell disaster. I, therefore, urge that the Bill should be placed on the Statute-book of the province as expeditiously as possible.

Coming to the examination of the papers in question, I shall first take the Champaran Planters' memorandum. Generally speaking, it is a paper containing a series of misrepresentations completely disentitling it to any weight being attached to it. The memorandum states that the Agrarian Committee was "admittedly appointed to allay an artificial agitation". The fact is that it was appointed in answer to the agitation set up by the planters in expectation of the *raiyats*' agitation being thereby stopped or suppressed. I cite in support the following extract from the *Pioneer*, the leading organ of Anglo-Indian opinion in the country. In its issue of about the middle of May 1917, it said:

> It appears to us that the Government of Bihar and Orissa would do well forthwith to appoint a commission to investigate the differences which exist between the planters and the *raiyats* in the Indigo districts. It is difficult to see what good can come of Mr. Gandhi's investigations. But an enquiry conducted with strict impartiality by a commission containing possibly a non-official element, would give both sides a fair opportunity of stating their case, and ought to result in a lasting peace.

And by the beginning of June the Government of Bihar and Orissa decided to appoint the Champaran Agrarian Committee. On the 8th of June, 1917, the Secretary[2] of the European Association addressed a letter to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bihar and Orissa saying:

[1] The orders of the Government were embodied in their resolution of October 18, 1917, which along with the Enquiry Committee Report was published in the *Bihar and Orissa Gazette* and in local languages for distribution among *raiyats*.

[2] Alec Marsh

> My Council observe with great satisfaction the decision of yo Government to appoint a Committee to enquire and investigate into relations between landlords and tenants in the Province of Bihar a Orissa.

The memorandum says that the *raiyats*' agitation was "ar ficial" and organized outside Champaran. The fact is that it w and has been solely confined to Champaran and an agitation which large masses of men took part could hardly be called a "artificial agitation". The memorandum says "the agitation w in no way the consequence of any widespread grievances". Tl Government's own finding and the voluminous papers produce before the Committee by the Government completely contradi this statement.

It would hardly be dignified for me to notice the many un called for and groundless aspersions cast upon the Agrarian Con mittee.

I will now take up the various amendments to the provisior of the Bill proposed by the Champaran planters in the memo randum.

Amendments to Section 3, Clause (1): Nothing perhaps ca surpass in recklessness the statement made in the memorandur that the Bill

> proposes to abolish without compensation and for no adequate reason system (*tinkathia*) which has been in existence for over a hundred years.

Such a statement is made in face of the fact that the Bill is design ed to give partial and, in my opinion, inadequate relief from th extortionate compensation taken by the planter for ending a sys tem when it had ceased to become a paying proposition to them One planter has even made a boast in the Press of the fact tha he has taken Rs. 3,20,000 from his *raiyats* as *tawan*[1] and has mad addition to his rent-roll of an annual income of Rs. 52,000 by tak ing *sharahbeshi*[2]. And there are several such planters.

The whole of the argument advanced in the memorandun about the *khushki* system simply shows that the signatories desire a modified revival of *tinkathia* under the name of *khushki*. By *khushk* I understand a contract voluntarily entered into by the *raiyat* to supply a particular produce to his landlord for a fair price to be

[1] Penalty

[2] An increase in the rent

mutually agreed upon. Any clause in the contract binding the *raiyat* to grow a particular crop on the whole or a portion of his land or in a particular plot even selected by himself would immediately rob it of the voluntary nature, and the *raiyat* is deprived of the right to use his land as he chooses. Such a clause would contravene the provisions of Section 23 read with Section 178 (3) (b) of the Bengal Tenancy Act. The system of advances has in the past operated as a bait and as a snare. A *khushki* contract should have nothing to do with the land of the *raiyat*. It should only provide for the delivery by the *raiyat* to the planter of so much of indigo by weight at a rate mutually agreed upon. The *raiyat* may produce the indigo on his own land or purchase it from others or get it from any other source. Once his land is brought in the contract, the inevitable result will be that the same sense of obligation with which the growing of indigo has up to now been connected and which it is the desire of the Agrarian Committee and of the Government to remove, in the interest of the future peace of the district, will gradually creep in the mind of the *raiyat* and will in time overpower him. It might be mentioned that the prime concern of the Legislature is not so much the prosperity or even the existence of an industry as the welfare of the *raiyats*. If the *raiyat* is to be freed entirely from the baneful effects of *tinkathia*, the *khushki* system must (a) leave him free to obtain the particular crop he undertakes to supply where he likes and how he likes, his obligation being limited to supply the quantity agreed upon; (b) make the period of *khushki* contracts as short as possible; and (c) give him the market rate of the produce supplied by him.

The amendments (b) and (c) to Section 3(1) proposed in the memorandum, as they fail to satisfy the tests set forth above, are wholly unacceptable from the *raiyats*' standpoint.

Coming to the amendment (a) to Section 3(1) proposed in the memorandum extending the period of termination of *tinkathia*, whether as an incident of tenancy or whether arising from *sattas* or agreements, to 1920, it is a most dangerous *proposition* and in breach of the undertaking of the three principal concerns referred to in the Committee's report. The Committee's recommendation that it should stand abolished as from October 1917 is the one recommendation which is already being acted upon. Acceptance, now, of the proposal of the Champaran planters who have signed the memorandum, would reopen the sore and give rise to unthinkable result[s]. The proposal is designed virtually to nullify the effects of the Committee's report and the Government proclamation based

thereon. The chief reason for continuing the system is sai to be that planters have already got seed and made arrangemen for the future growing of indigo. It must not, however, be forgotte that *khushki* is at their disposal and they can make use of the seec machinery and everything under it. It is true that real *khushk* will not give them that hold on the *raiyats* which the *sattas* do an will not give them the exorbitant profits, too, that they have hithe to received. But they never had a right in equity to any such one sided advantages. Consider [it] how we may, it is difficult t find a proper justification for continuing the system.

As to amendment (d) to Section 3(1) which seeks to continu the obligation until advances are repaid, I am sorry to find tha even the Board of Revenue has fallen into the trap. A moment' thought will show that such a continuance may even lead to endles continuation of the obligation, to harassments and to [a] crop of la suits. There will be nothing to prevent a planter from never askin a *raiyat* for a refund of the advance and thus an ignorant *raiyat* ma for ever remain in serfdom. I hope it will not be contended tha the planter should have security for refund of the advances. The do not need it. The *raiyats* are their tenants and they have th fullest hold upon them for any financial obligation, and I canno help saying that the proposed amendment is merely a device fo keeping on foot the pernicious system as long as possible. Th whole of the soothing effect of the proposed legislation will b practically neutralized if the amendment in question is accepte and [it] will put Champaran in a ferment.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED TO SECTION 4 ("SHARAHBESHI") : Th first amendment to this Section is based on a representation made b the managers of Sirnie Concern. But the amendment as it is worde proposes to reopen the question of the rate of reduction to be allowe not only in the case of Sirnie but also of Jalha and Motihari Concerns. There is absolutely no reason why the matter should be reopened. Mr. Irwin of the Motihari Concern was party to th compromise. As to the Sirnie case, I do not know that I am free to interpret the attitude of the Agrarian Committee in the matter. I can only say that, without a fresh reference to the Agrarian Committee, it is not possible to go behind the figures as they are a result of a solemn compromise, not merely as between the Committee and the planters, but also as between the different interests represented on the Committee itself. The compromise was one and an indivisible whole and one cannot break a part of it without breaking the whole. It is not true as stated in his representa-

tion that Mr. Bion[1] was not called to give evidence or given opportunity of having any statements recorded. Not only did he come under the general notice issued to all to send in their statements if they wanted to give any evidence, but he had received a special call from the Committee's report to show that, in fixing the rate of reduction in the enhancements, the sole determining factor was not the rates at which the enhancements were made. The reasoning applied to the case is generally applicable to the case of Jalha also.

AMENDMENT TO SECTION 4(2): There is one point on which it is possible to agree with the Champaran planters' memorandum. That the rental fixed under the Bill should be final and binding is fair; but any amendment that may be made will have to carefully guard the right of appeal on grounds of irregularity and want of jurisdiction.

SECTION 5 OF THE BILL: I have already sent in my amendment to the effect that the words "grown upon the land of his tenancy or any portion thereof" be omitted from the Section. I have explained in the earlier part of this letter, when dealing with *tinkathia*, why in a *khushki* contract no reference to the land of the *raiyat* should be made.

There are two amendments to this Section proposed by the Champaran planters in the memorandum.

The first is that the word "three" of Clause (1) should be substituted by the word "five". In other words, it is urged that *sattas* be limited to five years and not to three years only. The fact that even three years are granted is a concession. The period of *khushki* contracts should be as short as possible. The memorandum deplores the proposed termination of long-term *sattas* forgetting that not a single planter witness before the Committee has the hardihood to defend long-term *sattas* and some of them went even so far as to say that they did not enforce their *sattas*. Speaking of sugarcane *sattas*, Mr. Gordon Canning[2] said that "there were *sattas* entered into when he started sugarcane, but they were not enforced and might be regarded as a dead letter".

The other suggestion in the memorandum is that the *raiyats* should infinitely prefer to be paid at a flat rate based on the area of the land in which the specified crop is grown rather than by weight or appraisement. This is contrary to my experience. The

[1] Proprietor of Sirnie Concern
[2] Manager of Pursa Concern

real object, it may be observed, is here too as elsewhere a revival (*tinkathia*.[1]

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

89. LETTER TO DR. KULKARNI

[MOTIHARI,
January 24, 191

DEAR DR. KULKARNI,

When I posted my last letter to you, I had read the litera ture [sent by] you, but for me it was not convincing enough t turn me from my experiment. What you say is either true o untrue. If salt is the panacea for all evils, no effort should be spare(to double or even to quadruple its consumption. What I requir is statistics showing successful treatment of plague, etc., by the salin method. Having read a great deal against the use of salt in book on vegetarianism, I wanted to make the experiment on myself Nearly 7 years ago Mrs. Gandhi was suffering from copious hae morrhage. I was treating her with Kuhne baths and a strict dietary When I was almost in despair, I thought of the reasoning applie(against salt by Mrs. Wallace and against pulses by Dr. Haig. Salt Dr. Wallace has argued, is an irritant and a stimulant. Bein inorganic it passes out without being assimilated, but in its passag(making a great deal of mischief. It unduly excites the salivar) glands, irritates the stomach and thus induces men to eat mor(than they need, and taxing the organs unduly, it impoverishes th(blood. Both Mrs. Gandhi and I were, like most people, lovers o. salt and ate large quantities of it. I argued to myself that probabl) the introduction of salt in the system was responsible for th(continuation of her illness. I need not enter into the reasoning applied by me to the pulses. I was myself at this time ordinaril) hale and hearty. Certainly no change on the score of health wa: called for. But discovering that I could not wean Mrs. Gandhi from the use of salt and pulses without doing so myself, I left them off and so did she. There was no other change made in the treat- ment. Within a week's time she was free from haemorrhage and she

[1] A week later Gandhiji met W. Maude, Member of the Executive Council, Government of Bihar and Orissa, and had a detailed discussion with him on *khushki*, *sharahbeshi* and related matters. No report of the interview other than a note by Maude is available; *vide* Appendix XI.

who was, at the time of change, a skeleton quickly put on flesh.[1] I have ever since remained without salt. The condiment has such a hold upon her that she could not resist the temptation when there was no necessity for it. So when she had completely recovered, she took to salt eating. She does have haemorrhages now and then, and leaving off salt and taking friction baths enables her to recover quickly. During the seven years of my experiments, I have treated asthmatics and patients suffering from other lung diseases with a saltless diet, and they have almost invariably responded. As for myself, I have not suffered from serious illnesses any more than those with whom I come in daily contact. This saltless diet has, I believe, materially assisted me in my *brahmacharya* vow. With these experiences before me, your persistent advocacy of salt has come upon me with somewhat of a shock. There is one great change in me which I have been noticing and which I have discussed with medical friends without getting any light from them. If I receive a wound, it heals more quickly than before. I experience no feeling of excessive fatigue after long walks. But I seem to have become a green stick. The skin has become too tender and delicate. A knife would tear it, much more quickly than anybody else's. Although I invariably walk barefoot, the soles of my feet refuse to become tough and hard, as would anybody else's. My gums have become flabby and the few teeth I have left are more ornamental than useful. Is it possible that this delicateness is a result of a saltless diet? Of course, there are so many other changes that I have made in my life that it is difficult to single out salt for my condemnation. If I had not noticed this deterioration in me—if it is a deterioration—I should have, owing to the many other advantages I have experienced, very actively advocated a saltless diet. If I received some enlightened assistance from you, I would like, if it be for a temporary period, to go back to salt and watch its results upon my system. I was already conferring with Dr. Dev upon the advisability of interrupting my experiment when your letter came. Hence my last letter to you. If you have an accurate knowldge about the matter and if you are an enthusiast with a scientific mind which would refuse to swerve even by a hair's breadth from the path of truth even in a fit of enthusiasm, I would like to utilize your services both for plague research and for

[1] Describing his experiment of a saltless diet and this episode in detail, later, Gandhiji writes: "I would like to count this incident as an instance of satyagraha and it is one of the sweetest recollections of my life." *Vide An Autobiography*, Part IV, Ch. XXIX.

finding out the real value of salt as an article of human consumption. I shall try to secure the books you have mentioned.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

90. LETTER TO KAKA KALELKAR[1]

[MOTIHARI,]
January 24, 1918

The accused is either guilty or not guilty. If the former, he should go to jail by way of penance; if the latter, he should do so by way of a lesson to the magistrate. If every accused who is innocent were to go to jail after declaring his innocence, it would come about ultimately that an innocent person would hardly ever find himself in jail. So much from the common-sense point of view. The Professor's case has several special features. His riding a horse too fast was not the reason why it was instituted. That merely furnished a pretext. The motive behind the case was to discredit me anyhow, and through me the agitation. The assumption behind the step was that, though I could not be touched, my enemies would be pleased if others associated with me were. At a time like this, it was necessary that the Professor should go to jail and show what he was made of. The people here, moreover, are very much afraid of going to jail. This was a fine opportunity to rid them of their fear. It would not have been right to miss it. For the Professor as well to refuse to go through the experience [of imprisonment], which had offered itself to him unsought, would have been to throw away a golden opportunity. Satyagraha means fighting injustice by voluntarily submitting oneself to suffering. The judgment of the court was naked injustice. The Professor, undertaking to suffer by submitting to imprisonment, offered satyagraha. It is not for a satyagrahi to prefer an appeal. There is no room for [legal] defence in pure satyagraha. What we see is not pure satyagraha, but its diluted variety. Such dilution is a measure and a sign of our weakness. When we have pure satyagraha, the world will see its miraculous power. I am quite confident of this. From this point of view of satyagraha, therefore, there was no question at all of preferring an appeal. However, the desire to adhere

[1] Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (b. 1885); educationist, writer and constructive thinker; awarded *Padma Vibhushan*, 1964. The letter was in reply to his question how Professor Kripalani's going to jail could be satyagraha and why it was that an appeal was not preferred.

to pure satyagraha was but a secondary consideration in deciding against an appeal. The case was so trivial, as it seemed to me, that we have been able to expose both the partisan spirit and the stupidity of the magistrate by not magnifying its importance through an appeal. Moreover, no lawyer came forward to guarantee success in the appeal, if made. I suggested to them that they could file one on their own responsibility, telling them also that, if they lost, I would certainly blame them. There could be no appeal in this case. Revision was possible. In a revision, the superior court never goes into questions of fact. It only sets matters right if there has been an error of law. There was no scope for legal technicalities in this case. You will see that, in what we have done, the requirements of both satyagraha and the justice that obtains in what the world calls its practical affairs have been met.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

91. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

[MOTIHARI,]
January 24, 1918

CHI. JAMNADAS,

You will gain nothing by giving up your work and staying with me. You will yourself get tired in a few days and remember your old duty.

You should, therefore, find your happiness there. At present, your desire to stay with me is a kind of self-indulgence. Just as, after an act of such indulgence, one feels exhausted and depressed, so just now you will feel depressed after a few days with me. You may keep it in mind that one day you will join me and meanwhile, by way of preparation, attend to the duties that devolve upon you.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

92. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Posh Sud 12 [*January 24, 1918*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

Don't mind the celebration over the Professor's imprisonment. The musician has also been drawn into the thing all right. You will get the particulars about the Professor in the letter[1] to Kaka. If Fakira[2] has, indeed, sent any masons to volunteer their services, that shows that somewhere in the depth of his heart he still has a place for the Ashram. Thakorelal's illness seems to have persisted too long. It will be good if Vrajlal keeps as healthy as he will be when he arrives there. The indigo-planters here are kicking up quite a row. I am as unperturbed as I am vigilant. All that I have to do is to see that the peasants do not take a false step. I will send back Narahari at the earliest opportunity. I also feel that the National School must not suffer. I hope you are keeping very well. Ask Prabhudas to write to me.[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the copy in Mahadev Desai's hand: S.N. 6332

93. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

MOTIHARI,
Posh Sud 14 [*January 25, 1918*]

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. The reason for handing over the material to Mathuradas is that he may then publish it as he thinks fit. English speeches must, of course, be translated. He can do this. He is eager enough and likes the work. He is tempted by the thought that, as he translates, he will discover himself. He is a

1 *Vide* "Letter to Kaka Kalelkar", 24-1-1918.

2 Was in charge of stores at Phœnix; underwent imprisonments and was later deported; *vide* Vol. XI, "Diary, 1912".

3 To this Mahadev Desai added the following note addressed to Chhaganlal Gandhi: "Bapuji asks me to tell you that it will be best to credit Polak's account with Rs. 3,000/-. Give the accompanying papers to Mavlankar."

young man of character, and is anxious to serve the country. He has clung to me and has made the request with the most admirable motive. For all these various reasons, it seems right that he should be allowed to do this work. He has ample time for proof-reading, etc. Unless you help him, he is like a bird without wings. He can collect the material only if we give him the articles. He too does not want to be content with translating Natesan's volume. If you are free from this translation work, there is much else you can do. There remains now only one thing to consider. If you are committed to Akhandanandji and others and they don't release you, then, Mathuradas will certainly have to be disappointed. Even if they publish [the writings], it will be necessary to make some arrangements about proofs.

I have gone through your list. You can expand it considerably, if you care to. There are a great many articles of mine in *Indian Opinion* which I thought very valuable. You can make a selection from among them. Some of the petitions I drafted in South Africa contain a good amount of history. The open letter[1] I addressed in 1894 and the *Green Pamphlet*[2] which I wrote while here in India are a digest of numerous Blue-books. The petition[3] about indenture which I drafted in 1894 contains the substance of several Government dispatches on the subject. Thus, if you open the trunk of South Africa [papers], you will get plenty of material of every description. Anyone who feels tempted to collect it [in a volume] will have not less than six months' work on his hands. If, however, we publish *Dharmaniti*[4] and other books, that will also make a long list. The articles I wrote in England in 1890-91 are also worth including.[5] I don't know where you will find them. I have a faint idea that Manilal or Harilal preserved them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the original Gujarati in Mahadev Desai's hand: S.N. 6334

[1] *Vide* "Open Letter", December 1894, Vol. I, pp. 142-63.

[2] *Vide* "The Grievances of The British Indians in South Africa", August 14, 1896, Vol. II, pp. 1-52.

[3] Perhaps this refers to "Petition to Lord Ripon", July 17, 1894, Vol. I, pp. 116-28.

[4] Translated under the title *Ethical Religion*; *vide* Vol. VI.

[5] The first articles Gandhiji wrote were those published in *The Vegetarian* and *The Vegetarian Messenger* in 1891; he contributed occasionally to the former during 1892-5. *Vide* Vol. I.

94. LETTER TO G. V. MAVLANKAR

[MOTIHARI,]
January 27, 1918

BHAISHRI MAVLANKAR,

I have your letter about the Sabha's draft reply to the Press Note on Kaira. I like the first part of our reply. The second part is as weak [as the first is good]. I am not bothering to revise it. A stronger reply can be given to the Government's contention that any body outside the Kaira District is not competent to do anything in matters relating to that district. Whether or not that district was represented by any member on the Sabha, it is entitled to address the Government concerning any part of Gujarat. It is even its duty to do so. It was necessary to mention the names of the members of the Inquiry Committee. It was not proper to have made a distinction between senior and junior officers; unwittingly, we seem to have admitted that the inquiry would have been more searching and fair if made by senior officers. Our contention is that Government officers, from the very fact of being officers, inspire less confidence than experienced citizens who know their responsibility, for the officers are appointed to safeguard the interests of their class and they have a habit of rejecting anything that the people say. Public workers, on the other hand, have no interest of their own to serve. They are impartial and conscious that an error by them will not be passed over, they are more careful in conducting an inquiry. We ought to have brought out all this very effectively. In taking up this issue, our purpose is to educate [the people] and to show that we are as anxious for our prestige as the Government is for its. The latter often seeks to uphold its prestige by the strength of its authority. We should do ours merely by the justice of our actions. A training to this end in every detail [of conduct] and a definite lead for the purpose will provide the people an excellent education in swaraj. This is why I have concerned myself to offer all this criticism.

Another thing I should like to say is that, at a moment like this, timely action wins appreciation. The Committee must immediately attend to the problem, setting aside all other work, if need be. In short, the Committee can in no circumstances put off its duty. It should have able members, men of responsibility, who

can attend at any time. If we are right in our cause, it involves the safeguarding of the interests of thousands of poor people. Every public worker should think himself bound, as by a pledge, to leave aside all other work in public interest just as he would in his own. I think we are too late with our reply. Often, the Government, just because it is more alert, is able to suppress a popular movement. Justice does not help the ones who slumber but helps only those who are vigilant. This is not a maxim to be mouthed in courts of law but to be applied in every concern of practical life.

It is because you are all doing such fine work and are holding out so firmly that I have honoured you with this criticism. If I had wanted to suggest that you had been negligent, I would have done so by maintaining silence. It is never my practice to waste my time saying anything of the kind in so many words. I have said all this in love, that you may be more vigilant in future and that a body like the Sabha, of thirty years' standing, may gain in stature. Do not think it is a rebuke and do not take it to heart.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

95. LETTER TO SECRETARY, RAILWAY BOARD

MOTIHARI,
January 29, 1918

TO
THE SECRETARY
RAILWAY BOARD

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter No. 552-T-17, of the 22nd instant. I thank you for your long reply. I hope to deal with some of the points in the letter in a later communication.

Meanwhile I enclose herewith a copy of my address delivered before the recently held Social Service Conference in Calcutta.[1] I have marked therein the paragraph relating to the railway grievances. Probably you will agree with me that my reference to the conduct, among the passengers, of the Kabulis, requires immediate attention. I am sure that, if separate accommodation

[1] *Vide* "Address at All-India Social Service Conference", 31-12-1917.

is provided for them, it will relieve the ordinary traveller of a grea deal of discomfort.

N. A. I.: Railway, March 1918, 552-T-17/1-24

96. LETTER TO ADA WEST

[PATNA,
January 31, 191

DEAR DEVI,

Manilal's case is sad. I have written to him a consoling letter It is difficult for me to be reconciled to his marriage. If he ca stand a few more years of bachelor life, he will get hardened. have told him that he is to consider himself entirely as a free ma and to receive my advice as from a friend. You are all just now go ing through fire. May you all come out unburnt.

Here I am in the midst of three imminent battles of passiv resistance;[1] which will ultimately take place, it is difficult to say But they just now absorb all my time and keep me constantly o the wheels. This journeying is an exhausting process. But it ha got to be gone through.

With love,

Your
BHA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Des

97. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

[PATNA.
January 31, 191

I hear from Devibehn that you showed yourself unhappy befor Sam at being unmarried. Please do not allow anything to stan in the way of your telling me what you think. You are not m prisoner, but my friend. I shall give you my advice honestly you may think over what I say and then act as it seems best t you. I should not like you to do anything sinful out of fear of m I want you not to stand in awe of me or anyone else.

[1] The reference is evidently to the Kheda Satyagraha, the Ahmedab mill-hands' situation and the Home Rule agitation.

In my view, you certainly ought not to marry. Your welfare lies in not marrying. If you find it impossible to continue in your present state, you may come away to India when you are free to leave and think what you should do. Evidently, nothing can be done while you are there. If you have decided that you should marry, I believe you will get a suitable match. I take it that you will not give up your work just in order to get married. You may consider marriage only when you can leave *Indian Opinion* in good order. See that you don't lose your cheerfulness; and don't indulge in day dreams. We have a thousand desires; all of them cannot be satisfied. Remember this and be serene. Be clear in your mind that whatever you do will be above board and done openly. Everything then will be for the best.

I may have to put up a stiff fight over Mahomed Ali; I have come to no decision, though.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

98. LETTER TO G. V. MAVLANKAR

[PATNA,]
January 31, 1918

I can very well realize the moral dilemma in which you find yourself. Damayanti found herself in difficulty only when she was face to face with several persons looking like Nala. Real firmness is displayed in a situation of this kind. That is no easy matter, however, and hence mistakes on such occasions are pardonable. I can see the point in our collecting a hundred thousand rupees and paying the revenues from the amount, but the effort will have no effect on the Government. I don't see how our paying up the dues on behalf of the farmers can ever worry the Government. On the other hand, auctioning their cattle will be a jaw-breaking undertaking. The purpose of satyagraha is not to save our face but to instil courage into the people and make them independent in spirit. If, because of fear, or distrust of us, people lose heart and pay up, they but deserve to pay [compulsorily]. We, on our part, should exert ourselves still more to be worthy of their trust. This is the royal road of satyagraha. If I had a hundred thousand rupees, I would go from house to house telling people to let their

cattle be auctioned, but not to borrow money to pay up the revenue dues. At the auction I would use the money to bid for the people's cattle and, in due time, return them to the owners who would have held out through a difficult time. I would not tell the people that I intended to see their cattle safe. As things are, if everything goes all right, the Government will practically have to apologize.

All this will appear as wisdom after the event and hence o little value. Do what you think the situation demands from time to time. I have the invaluable opportunity of watching your work from a distance and you, on your part, are discovering that no one in this world is indispensable.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

99. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

[BOMBAY,
February 2, 191

Deva, the day you are fit to take my place, no one will dare to prevent you from doing so. All that I want is that you should grow very strong. Don't think you have no aptitude. One learn to do things as they come.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

100. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI*[1]

[BOMBAY,
February 2, 191

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

There is much in the Ashram even when I am not there; should like you to discover it. It would be a sad state of affairs indeed, if it were my physical presence alone which lent the Ashrar its life, for the mere body is bound to perish. The soul is alway there, if only you can feel its presence. If we love anyone, the mor

[1] The letter was in reply to Prabhudas Gandhi's complaint that he fe lonely without Devdas and that the Ashram, in Gandhiji's absence, appeare to be lifeless.

indifferent we become to his physical presence the purer will be our love for him. The Ashram will not seem lonely if we cultivate in ourselves the spirit that we all strive to create in the atmosphere there; in fact, the community spirit will grow the sooner if we do this.

Without meaning to, I have written a letter rather beyond you. Ask Chi. Chhaganlal to explain anything in it you don't understand. Show it to others, too, for it is one which may do good to all. Preserve it and read it over and over again so that you fully understand every word of it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

101. LETTER TO SOMEONE IN RANCHI

[BOMBAY,]
February 2, 1918

Anyone who observes the Ashram rules is of the Ashram, though he may not have actually joined it. On the contrary, he who deliberately violates them is not of the Ashram, though in it.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

102. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MRS. JINARAJADAS

[BOMBAY,]
February 2, 1918

Mrs. Gandhi is an almost illiterate woman; she cannot even sign her name in English. Do you want mere names to adorn your register?[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This was Gandhiji's comment on being informed that Kasturba Gandhi had been enrolled as a member of the All-India Women's Association; *vide* "Fragment of Letter to Mrs. Jinarajadas", before 10-2-1918.

103. SPEECH ON KHEDA SITUATION, BOMBAY[1]

February 4, 1918

I do not want to say much. I have received a letter asking me to be present at tomorrow's deputation[2] that is going to wait on His Excellency the Governor, and I am sure I will be able to explain to him the true facts. Still, I must make it clear here that the responsibility of the notice[3] issued by the Gujarat Sabha lies on me. I was at Ahmedabad before that notice was issued, where the matter of Kheda district was being discussed, when it was decided that the Gujarat Sabha ought to take part in the matter. I think that, as regards this notice, a mountain has been made out of a molehill. Everyone knew what the notice was when it was being framed. Nobody then even dreamt that Government would misinterpret it. The Sabha had with it sufficient data about the plight of the people. They came to know that Government officials were collecting taxes and the people were even selling their cattle to pay the taxes. The matter had come to such a pass, and, knowing this, the Sabha thought it better to issue a notice to console the people who braved these hardships. And the notice was the result of that information, and I have every hope that, in the deputation that is going to wait on the Governor, the result of the deliberations will end in the success of the people.

If the Commissioner had not been angry with us, and had talked politely with the deputation that waited on him, and had not misinstructed the Bombay Government, such a grave crisis would not have eventuated, and we would not have had the trouble of meeting here this evening. The Sabha's request was to suspend the collection of dues till the negotiations were over. But Government did not take this proper course and issued an angry Press Note. It was my firm belief—and even now I firmly believe—that the representatives of the people and Government could have joined together and taken the proper steps. I regret to have to say that Government has made a mistake. Perhaps subordinate

[1] The public meeting, largely attended by merchants and traders, was held at the Moolji Jetha Market. Jamnadas Dwarkadas presided.

[2] This consisted of Vithalbhai Patel, Dinshah Wacha and Gokuldas Parekh, besides Gandhiji. No report of the discussion is available.

[3] The notice, circulated among the farmers of Kheda district on January 10, had advised them to refrain from paying land revenue.

offiicers of Government would say to Government that the notice was issued not from a pure motive, but from some other ulterior motive. If Government are impressed with this erroneous belief, those who have stood by the people, I hope, will continue to stand by them to the end and will not retreat. Any responsible right-thinking man could have given them the same advice. People possess the same rights as the authorities have, and public men have every right to advise the people of their rights. The people that do not fight for their rights are like slaves ("Hear, hear"), and such people do not deserve Home Rule.[1] When authorities think that they can take anything from the people and can interfere, a difficult situation arises and if such a situation arises, I must plainly say that those who have given the people the right advice will stand by them till the end.

I have not yet come to any conclusion, and I sincerely trust that those who understand the responsibility will not hesitate to undergo hardships in order to secure justice.(Applause.) And in such an eventuality I hope you will not beat an ignominious retreat. The first and the last principle of passive resistance is that we should not inflict hardships on others, but put up with them ourselves in order to get justice, and Government need not fear anything, if we make up our mind, as we are bent on getting sheer justice from it and nothing else. To get that justice we must fight with the authorities, and the people that do not so fight are but slaves. We can have only two weapons on occasions like this : revolt or passive resistance, and my request is for the second remedy always. The right of suffering hardships, and claiming justice and getting one's demands is from one's birth. Similarly, we have to get justice at the hands of the Government by suffering hardships. We must suffer hardships like brave men. What I have to say is: resort to the right means, and that very firmly, in order to remove the distress through which the people of Gujarat are passing. It is my conviction that if we tell the truth to the British Government it can ultimately be convinced, and if only

[1] According to a report of February 10 in *Prajabandhu*, a Gujarati daily, Gandhiji here observed: "We should place our demands before the Government, even if we have to suffer in consequence. India has followers of four different faiths and members of all of these—Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Christianity—will need to employ satyagraha often enough."

we are firm in our resolve, rest assured that Kheda people shall suffer wrongs no more. (Loud Cheers.)[1]

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-2-1918

104. LETTER TO GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY

BOMBAY,
February 5, 1918

I hope that your Government will find it possible to agree to my suggestion[2] and will appoint an independent committee. If such a committee is appointed, I strongly recommend that Shris Parekh and Patel be appointed on it. Both these gentlemen have taken keen interest in this movement right from the outset and no one will stand out against any decision approved by them. Dr. Harold Mann would be acceptable to all as chairman of the committee; alternatively, Mr. Ewbank may be considered: his selection would be equally welcome. I am returning to Sabarmati today and I shall remain there for two or three days. If you need me, please let me know.[3]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

[1] A shorter report of this speech is also available in *Kheda Satyagraha.*

[2] This was evidently made during the deputation's interview with the Governor earlier in the day.

[3] To this Gandhiji received the following reply, dated February 9, from the Secretary to the Governor: "Neither from the discussion which took place between you and His Excellency the Governor on the 5th, nor from the accounts which have appeared in the papers, is it clear to the Governor that the local officers have in any way been harsh. He is not satisfied, therefore, that any advantage would be gained by appointing an independent commission. He is also anxious like you to remove all doubts and suspicions from the minds of the people, and he hopes that as a result of the detailed steps taken by the Collector and the Commissioner, of which an account was given to you on the 5th, you will have been satisfied in this respect and will assist all concerned in removing from people's minds their misapprehensions."

105. LETTER TO COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN DIVISION[1]

SABARMATI,
February 7, 1918

F. G. PRATT, ESQ.
AHMEDABAD

I have read some of the notices issued over the signature of the Mamlatdar of Kapadvanj. One notice threatens confiscation if land revenue is not paid before the 11th of January. I have seen several of the people on whom this notice was served. They appear to me to be respectable gentlemen. Their objection is one of principle. Many of these people are holding lands on special tenure. I feel certain that, whatever the Government's final decision, the Government would not wish to take steps which can only leave bitterness behind. I have seen another notice issued by this Mamlatdar. In this an expression *dandai* has been used in regard to highly respected landowners. This word can only mean "scoundrel", and I must say that such language is unbecoming and unnecessarily painful in such a context.[2]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

106. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS[3]

February 8, 1918

You should address a letter to the mill-owners about your grievances. We do not want any bitterness to grow between the two

[1] On his return to Sabarmati Ashram on February 6, Gandhiji was shown copies of notices and circulars issued by the Mamlatdars and the Collector. *Vide* also "Letter to Commissioner, Northern Division", after February 10, 1918.

[2] To this, the Commissioner replied, on February 10, as follows: "The penalty for failure to pay up land revenue has been clearly set out in the Land Revenue Code. Nothing has been done against the law, nothing will be done against the law. I cannot understand, therefore, why you say that steps which have been taken in accordance with the law are steps which are irritating and must increase bitterness."

[3] Gandhiji had gone to Bombay in connection with the Kheda situation. There he met Ambalal Sarabhai, the Ahmedabad mill-owner, who told him of the discontent among mill-hands over the issue of bonus. Sarabhai requested Gandhiji to intervene. Gandhiji went to Ahmedabad and studied the problem first-hand. The workers apprehended great hardship from an abrupt stoppage of the plague bonus and were demanding a dearness increase of 50 per cent in its place. This was, perhaps, the first meeting of mill-hands that Gandhiji addressed.

parties. We cannot all at once demand an increase of 50 to 60 per cent. We shall appeal to them with due firmness. If, despite that, they do not agree, we will have five persons nominated by each side and accept their decision. It will be binding on both sides. They are sure to consider our reasonable demands. They, too, are Indians, like us and there is no reason, therefore, to give up hope. You should follow the path of justice and seek a solution without bitterness. This will make your case all the stronger. Anasuyabehn lives only for you. With increased earnings as demanded by you, you should learn to be clean, should get rid of your various addictions and see that your children get education. Place your just demands before your employers without fear. I want to help you in all this as much as I can.

[From Gujarati]
Gujarati, 17-2-1918

107. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MRS. JINARAJADAS[1]

[SABARMATI,
Before *February 10, 1918*]

The sentence about Mrs. Gandhi's signature in English was unhappily worded. The complete thought has not been given in it. Mrs. Gandhi is not educated in any sense of the term. She can hardly read and write Gujarati. That she cannot even sign her name in English was intended to convey to those who prize English education the full measure of Mrs. Gandhi's unfitness to become a member of an association whose members are scholars, either in their own language or in English.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The letter was Gandhiji's rejoinder to the addressee's gentle rebuke for his letter to her dated February 2; *vide* p. 181.

108. LETTER TO H. N. KUNZRU[1]

SATYAGRAHASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
February 10, 1918

. .[2] I am handling a most dangerous situation and am preparing to go to a still more dangerous . . . .[3] You will now understand why I have not gone to the Mela.[4] I was looking forward to having an opportunity of seeing Hinduism at work both in its devilish and divine character. The former, I know, cannot influence me, and I had relied upon the latter doing for me what it did for me at Hardwar.[5] I was also looking forward to meeting you and preaching you a few homely sermons on the necessity of Servants of India not making it a regular habit of getting ill almost every alternate month. But it was not to be.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

109. LETTER TO COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN DIVISION

SABARMATI,
[After *February 10, 1918*]

I enclose herewith a copy of a notice[6] issued over the signature of the Collector. I have marked on it the portion which I regard as couched in unbecoming and unnecessarily painful language. That sentence insults both the Secretaries of the Sabha and those who accept its advice. I am sure that it was not his intention to use expressions which convey the meaning they do in Gujarati.

[1] Hriday Nath Kunzru (b. 1887); President of Servants of India Society since 1936 and of Indian Council for World Affairs since 1948

[2] & [3] Some portions are omitted in the source.

[4] He was invited to attend the Kumbha Mela at Allahabad.

[5] Gandhiji is referring to his experience during the Kumbha Mela in 1915. There he took the vow not to eat more than five articles of food in a day and to eat nothing after nightfall; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. VII.

[6] This is not available.

I also enclose a statement[1] of the Mamlatdar, the language of which too, you will see, is very objectionable. In regard to forfeiture notices, I must say that to confiscate land worth thousands of rupees for failure to pay a small amount of land revenue is an unreasonably excessive punishment and can only be regarded as vindictive.[2]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

110. LETTER TO VINOBA BHAVE[3]

[SABARMATI,
After *February 10, 1918*]

I do not know in what terms to praise you. Your love and your character fascinate me and so also your self-examination. I am not fit to measure your worth. I accept your own estimate and assume the position of a father to you. You seem almost to have met a long-felt wish of mine. In my view a father is, in fact, a father only when he has a son who surpasses him in virtue. A real son, likewise, is one who improves on what the father has done; if the father is truthful, firm of mind and compassionate, the son will be all this in a greater measure. This is what you have made yourself. I don't see that you owe your achievement to any effort of mine. Hence, I accept the role you offer to me as a gift of love. I shall strive to be worthy of it; and, if ever I become another Hiranyakashipu, oppose me respectfully as Prahlad, who loved God, disobeyed him.

It is true as you say that, though outside the Ashram, you have scrupulously observed its rules. I never doubted that you would return. Besides, I had your written messages, read out by Mama. May God grant you long life, and use you for the uplift of India.

[1] This is not available.

[2] The Commissioner's reaction to this letter was conveyed on February 16. He wrote: "You have used very strong terms regarding the language of the various statements. I have examined them all myself and I am satisfied that there is no reasonable basis for your complaint."

[3] On reading Vinoba Bhave's letter explaining why he had not returned to the Ashram for a whole year, Gandhiji remarked: "So Gorakha [the disciple] has gone one better than Machchhindra [the master]. He is a Bhima indeed", and dictated this letter.

I don't see any need for changes in your diet just yet. Do not give up milk for the present. On the contrary, increase the quantity, if necessary.

About the railways, no satyagraha is required. What is wanted is intelligent workers to carry on propaganda. On the issue in Kheda District, satyagraha may possibly have to be offered. I am something of a tramp these days. In a day or two, I shall have to leave for Delhi.

More when you arrive. Everyone is looking forward to seeing you.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

111. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI MEHTA

ASHRAM,
Posh Vad [February 11, 1918]

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

I have your letter. It shows that what may have been intended as help has the opposite effect sometimes. That is how I have felt about the article in *Gujarati*. I can do the work in Kathiawad in my own way.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 3027. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] When he had finished dictating the letter, Mahadev Desai records Gandhiji as saying, "He is a great man. I have always felt that I am fortunate in my dealings with Maharashtrians and Madrasis. Of the latter, there is none now. But no Maharashtrian has ever disappointed me. And among them all, Vinoba is beyond praise!"

112. LETTER TO RALIYATBEHN

[SABARMATI,]
February 11, 1918

MY REVERED SISTER,

Though I don't write to you, your image has not been out of my mind even for an hour. Your not being with me has given me a wound that will never heal. You alone can heal it. If you were with me, seeing you I would at least have some recollections of mother. You have deprived me of that also. I have a standing complaint against you. You do not give me an opportunity to claim, with pride, that even my sister is helping me in my work. Even if I should write, I could only pour out my grief and twit you as I am doing now. That is one reason why I put off writing. I know prices have gone up these days, but where am I to find more money? I can only obtain it from a friend. With what face can I approach one? He also will say that my sister should be living with me. What am I to reply, then? The world does not regard me as defiled. I am so to you, however. In these circumstances, there is only one thing I can say. I don't live in greater comfort than you do and so your hardships don't seem unbearable to me. I am not in the least ashamed that you have to find the extra money you need by grinding corn for others. I only pray, if you have any compassion in you, that you come over and live with me and join me in my work. You will then cease to feel, as you perhaps do at present, that you have no brother and will find not one but many brothers and be a mother to many children. This is true *Vaishnava* dharma. And till you see that it is, we cannot do otherwise than endure separation.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

113. LETTER TO NIRMALA

[SABARMATI,]
February 11, 1918

CHI. NIRMALA[1],

Show this letter to sister Raliyat. What shall I write to you? I think of so much work you can do. I can fill your whole life with beauty and help you to forget your being a widow. I have some women helping me. Unfortunately, I cannot have your help. I may not blame you as I do Raliyat, for you have two elders to please, a father and a sister. All the same, if you wish to help me, you can not only obtain their permission for yourself but can also bring over sister Raliyat. Without you, she just cannot live. I am sure I shall have you with me some day. I think you do realize that, had Gokuldas been alive, he would not have found it possible to keep away from me even for a moment. By joining me you will bring peace to his soul as well.

Ba is in Bihar. She thinks of you so often. I shall have to remain here some more time yet.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

114. LETTER TO A CO-WORKER

[SABARMATI,]
Magha Sud 2 [*February 12, 1918*]

BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. It would serve no purpose to hurt you by using strong words. There are quite a few men who speak of their weaknesses as though they were their virtues. You are one such. It might be claimed that you take part in public life because you have some exceptional gift, but, in your actions, you show yourself weaker than others. You made it out that you had been deeply grieved for your former wife, that her dying words had had a profound effect on you. Then you forgot all about the wound, and the effect of the dying words faded into

[1] Widow of Gokuldas, a nephew of Gandhiji

nothingness. If a man crying in extreme pain had suddenly started laughing aloud he would be considered either an actor or a lunatic. You, who were crying yesterday, are all smiles today. What epithet can describe you? A man whose desires are not under his control, who is incapable of the least self-discipline, is such a man fit to be in public life? Do not answer back that you are better than many others one comes across in public life and thus sink lower than you have already done.

The step you have taken has an important bearing on social reform among Hindus. It is more needul that widowers show some sense of decency than that widows should remarry. You have violated the most fundamental principle. If a Gujarat Seva-mandal comes to be formed and I am[1] required to have close association with it, it would be very difficult for me to decide whether you could be admitted to it or not. God forbid I should judge you—it is for Him alone to judge—but I would not give up my right to decide who shall be my associates in my life's work.

You have let the world know what kind of a wound it was that your former wife's death had inflicted on you. Your action has struck me like a thunderbolt. May God save you and grant you good sense.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

115. LETTER TO A. H. WEST

[SABARMATI,]
February 13, 1918

MY DEAR WEST,

I hope you have received all my letters. I have your two letters to acknowledge. I do not really know what to say. I have read Ritch's and Debeer's letters. From their standpoint they are right. For me, you would better serve the work by being a good agriculturist. Manilal's advice from Johannesburg does not appeal to me. He ought to be in Phœnix to manage the Gujarati portion.[2] But, as I have said, you are the final arbiter and you

[1] The source has "you are", which is an error.
[2] The reference, evidently, is to *Indian Opinion*.

should do what you think is best. So far as I am concerned the property is as much yours as mine, and so is the cause. Having said so much about Phœnix, I would like to speak to you about my activities here. The very fact that I write so little to you shows how busy I must be here. I think everybody wonders at my output of work. And nothing is of my seeking. I have taken up activities as they have come to me. In Bihar, besides watching the legislative activity, I am opening and managing schools. The teachers are as a rule married people. And both husband and wife work. We teach the village children, give the men lessons in hygiene and sanitation and see the village women, persuade them to break through the purdah and send their girls to our schools. And we give medical relief free of charge. Diseases are known and so are remedies. We, therefore, do not hesitate to entrust the work to untrained men and women provided they are reliable. For instance, Mrs. Gandhi is working at one such school and she freely distributes medicine. We have, perhaps, by this time relieved 3,000 malaria patients. We clean village wells and village roads and thus enlist villagers' active co-operation. Three such schools have been opened and they train over 250 boys and girls under 12 years. The teachers are volunteers.

Then there is the work in Gujarat. It consists in carrying out the programme set forth in the Godhra and Broach addresses.[1] At the present moment I am trying to deal with imminent passive resistance. The activities in Gujarat are multifarious. Lastly, I am endeavouring to lead the movement for the release of the Ali Brothers. I am working on a programme for dealing with cow protection, sanitation, national system of education, hand weaving and acceptance of Hindi as the lingua franca of India. Of course, the Ashram and the national school continue.

In all this it is my good fortune to be well assisted. This activity involves a great deal of travelling.

The Ashram is beautifully situated on the banks of the Sabarmati river. We daily bathe in it. All the children can swim now. The school is under an able Principal[2] who was a distinguished professor of the Gujarat College. The Ashram, of course, is under Maganlal's management. I do not know what is in store for the Ashram or the school. They are at the present moment popular institutions.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Second Gujarat Educational Conference", 20-10-1917, and "Speech at Gujarat Political Conference–I", 3-11-1917.

[2] Sankalchand Shah

In all these activities I often wish for the co-operation of fellow-workers there. But I know it cannot be. But, believe me, there is not a moment I do not think of one or the other of you. Many of your exploits serve as apt illustrations for me. I am building on the experience gained there.

Please tell Mrs. West that she should not consider for one moment that I have forgotten her or granny. Nor have I forgotten the assurances given by me. New ties and new acquaintances cannot make me forget old ones.

This letter is not for publication. I do not wish to talk publicly of my activities.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai. Also from a photostat of a portion of the original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 4426. Courtesy: A. H. West

116. LETTER TO PARVATHY

[MOTIHARI,]
February 13, 1918

MY DEAR PARVATHY[1],

You see I began your letter in Gujarati as I rarely write [in] English to girls and boys. But I know I must write to you in English. You will say, 'If you had provided for my Gujarati or Hindi tuition, I would also have understood your Gujarati and Hindi letters!' You would be right if you said so. I would however say, 'If you had only gone with me or followed me to India, you would have been truly my daughter and learnt Hindi and Gujarati.'

Please tell Sam that I expect him to make of Phœnix an agricultural success. Do please write to me all about your doings there. Radha and Rukhi have grown wonderfully. Rukhi looks almost as big as Radha. They have both made considerable progress in their tuition.

With love to you all,

Yours,
GANDHI[2]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Daughter of Govindswami, a colleague of Gandhiji in South Africa
[2] The signature in the original is in Tamil.

117. EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN DIVISION

[SABARMATI,
February 15, 1918]

I would like to reassure you that it is not my intention just to start an agitation or to encourage a futile agitation. I am going to Kheda district in search of truth. I see that, until the reports of your local officers are proved to be incorrect, you will not pay any attention to our representations. Although, therefore, I have full assurance of reputable leaders of the district, I feel it my duty to verify the facts for myself. If you are able to postpone the land revenue recovery work until my inquiry is completed, it will help a great deal in reducing the discontent that has now spread among the people. I shall be glad if you will instruct the Collector to give me, as a public worker, as much assistance as he can. If you wish to send any representative of yours with me during my inquiry, I shall have no objection.[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

118. LETTER TO A VISITOR[2]

[SABARMATI,]
February 15, 1918

BHAISHRI . . . ,

Your letter made painful reading. What you say now was not out of your mind when you took the pledge. Your duty lay in honouring it, even if your entire family were to starve in consequence. Only persons of that stamp can mould a nation. Others are just not to be reckoned as men. You were under no pressure to take the pledge and you had ample time to think the matter over. If we do not make rapid progress, the reason is to

[1] The Commissioner replied the same day: "I see no reason whatever for postponing the recovery of land revenue until your inquiry is completed. I have no doubt that Mr. Ghoshal, the Collector, will give you all necessary information and assistance if you ask him."

[2] This was addressed to a visitor who had informed Gandhiji that he was unable to keep the Ashram vows he had taken a few days earlier.

be found solely in our extreme weakness. I am not writing this letter that you may now honour your pledge. Even if you should come, you would not be accepted. You had better work for your family now. Think of the sin you have committed, be all humility and live a quiet life. Never to take a pledge again without making sure of yourself—this should be your *prayaschita*[1].

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

119. LETTER TO DAHYALAL

[SABARMATI,]
February 15, 1918

BHAISHRI DAHYALAL,

I have your postcard. Reading of Amritlal's death, I was led to think of so many things. But a moment ago, Navalram told me that some others of your co-workers also died while nursing victims of the plague. If such was the manner of their death, there is no reason for grief, only for rejoicing. We should welcome such a death for any of us. The saying that there is no better death than on the field of battle is apposite in this case. The body is bound to perish when it is worn out. One may even welcome that. Let us, therefore, believe that the spirits of Amritlal, Motilal and their co-workers will inhabit new and fitter bodies and serve India when it is their time to do so.

Give my condolences to Amritlal's family.

It will also be a kind of service if you try your best and see that Motilal's widow is sent over here as early as possible.

Vandemataram from
M. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Atonement

120. LETTER TO ANANDIBAI

[SABARMATI,]
February 16, 1918

I was extremely sorry to learn of your sister-in-law's death. But I know that you are aware of the *atman* and am therefore sure that you will at once realize that birth and death are in reality states of the same thing. However, it has become part of man's nature to grieve over a death. I want to share your grief in your bereavement. Let this give you what solace it can. For persons like you who have dedicated themselves to service, there is only one way to mourn a death and that is to dedicate themselves all the more to such service.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Marathi]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

121. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[SABARMATI,]
February 16, 1918

CHI. DEVDAS,

I came here for a day, but it seems I shall have to stay for about a month. I wanted to go to Delhi today; instead, I shall have to go to Nadiad for the Kaira work. If I back out now, thousands will be put to heavy loss. People will yield and be utterly dispirited. The situation being what it is, I have stayed on for the present. I am hoping that I shall be able to get away in ten days. I keep thinking of you all the time. I know you have plenty of zeal and can interest yourself in anything. Had you been here, you would have every moment observed the supreme wonder and power of truth. This is all the legacy I can leave for you. As I believe, it is an inexhaustible legacy. For him who knows its worth, it is priceless. Such a one would ask to have or desire no other legacy. I think you have realized its worth and will cherish it with love. I dreamt last night that you betrayed my trust in you, stole currency notes from a safe and changed them. You spent the amount on vices. I came to know about

it. I took alarm; felt very miserable. Just then I awoke and saw that it was all a dream. I thanked God. This dream bespeaks my attachment to you. You of course want it. You need not fear that it will ever disappear altogether during this present life. I am making a supreme effort to bear equal love to all but, from you, I do hope for something more [than from others].

I am not writing separately to Chi. Chhotalal and Chi. Surendra. You may show this to them, if you like, or tell them of it. You will have equal reason, though, not to show it to them, on the ground that, as it bears on the sacred relationship of father and son, it had better remain in your exclusive possession.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

122. *FOREWORD TO VOLUME OF GOKHALE'S SPEECHES*

[Before *February 19, 1918*]

As I was the first to come by the idea of bringing out a translation of the speeches of the late mahatma Gokhale on his death anniversary, it is in a way appropriate that I myself write the foreword to the first volume. It is hoped that we will keep on celebrating the Gokhale anniversary. Every time to sing devotional songs, make speeches and then disperse is very much of a waste of time with no gain to anyone. In order that people may attach more importance to action than to speech-making and that they may derive some tangible benefit from the annual celebrations, the organizers of the anniversary resolved last year to publish, on the occasion, a useful book in the mother tongue. They decided, at the same time, what book was to be published and, naturally enough, the choice fell on the speeches of the late mahatma.

It was everyone's wish that the translation should be an outstanding work in Gujarati literature and that every effort should be made to preserve in the translation the beauty of the holy word of the mahatma as it stands in the original. This could not be secured with money but only through voluntary services. These we obtained, but, even so, the future alone can say whether the desired result has been achieved. The part to which this is a foreword has been translated by Shri Mahadev Haribhai Desai. This is no occasion to say anything of him by way of introduction. I shall only mention that he is a lover of Gujarati literature.

He is no stranger to the subject; besides, he is one of the thousands of the late mahatma's votaries. He has carried out his task with great enthusiasm and devotion and one may justifiably hope, therefore, that this translation will earn a place in Gujarati literature.

During last year's anniversary celebrations, as soon as the Home Rule League of Bombay learnt that a decision to publish the volume was about to be announced, its secretaries wired an offer of generous help and later sanctioned a big amount, no less than three thousand rupees, for this project; and so the organizing committee had little worry left for collection of funds and its desire to ensure beauty of printing and the general get-up was satisfied even in these times of rising prices. The Home Rule League deserves congratulations on this large-hearted help. The foregoing paragraphs are but a foreword to the Foreword. In the Foreword itself, one must write something about the departed soul. What could a disciple, however, write about his master? How could he write it? It would be presumptuous for a disciple to do so. The true disciple merges himself in the guru and so can never be a critic of the guru. *Bhakti* or devotion has no eye for shortcomings. There can be no cause for complaint if the public do not accept the eulogies of one who refuses to analyse the merits and shortcomings of his subject. The disciple's own actions are, in fact, his commentary on the master. I have often said that Gokhale was my political guru. That is why I consider myself incapable of writing about him. Whatever I write would seem imperfect in my eyes. I believe the relationship between the master and the disciple is purely spiritual. It is not based on arithmetical calculations. The relationship is formed on the instant, spontaneously, as it were, and never snaps once it is formed.

This relationship of ours was formed in the year 1896.[1] I had no idea of its nature then; nor had he. About the same time, I had the good fortune to wait on the master's master [Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade[2]], Lokamanya Tilak, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta[3], Justice Badruddin Tyabji[4], Dr. Bhandarkar[5],

[1] *Vide* Vol. II, p. 89.

[2] 1842-1901; eminent judge, reformer, and a founder of the Indian National Congress; *vide* Vol. II, p. 379.

[3] 1845-1915; prominent Indian leader, twice president of the Congress; *vide* Vol. I, p. 384.

[4] 1844-1906; judge, legislator, president of the Congress; *vide* Vol. I, p. 386.

[5] R. G. Bhandarkar (1837-1925); orientalist and reformer; *vide* Vol. II, p. 376.

as also the leaders of Madras and Bengal. I was but a raw youth. Everyone of them showered his love on me. These were among the occasions which I can never forget while I live. But the peace of mind which my contacts with Gokhale gave me, those with others did not. I do not remember that any special affection was shown to me by Gokhale. If I were to measure and compare the love I experienced from them all, I have an impression that no one else showed such love to me as Dr. Bhandarkar did. He told me: "I do not take any part in public affairs now. But, for your sake I will preside over the public meeting[1] on the issue which you have at heart." Still, it was only Gokhale who bound me to himself. Our new relationship did not take shape immediately. But in 1902[2], when I attended the Calcutta Congress, I became fully aware of my being in the position of a disciple. Now, again, I had the privilege of meeting almost all the leaders mentioned above. I saw that Gokhale had not only not forgotten me but had actually taken me under his charge. This had its tangible results. He dragged me to his quarters. During the Subjects Committee meeting, I felt helpless. While the various resolutions were under discussion, I could not, right till the end, gather enough courage to declare that I too had a resolution in my pocket on South Africa. It was not to be expected that the night would halt for my sake. The leaders were impatient to finish the business on hand. I was trembling with the fear that they would rise to leave any moment. I could not summon up courage to remind even Gokhale of my business. Just then he cried out, "Gandhi has a resolution on South Africa; we must take it up."[3] My joy knew no bounds. This was my first experience of the Congress and I put great store by resolutions passed by it. There is no counting the occasions [of our meeting] that followed, and they are all sacred to me. For the present, however, I think I would do well to state what I have believed to be the guiding principle of his life and conclude this Foreword.

In these difficult and degenerate times, the pure spirit of religion is hardly in evidence anywhere. Men who go about the world calling themselves *rishis*, *munis* and sadhus rarely show this spirit in themselves. Obviously, they have no great treasure of the religious spirit to guard. In one beautiful phrase, Narasinha Mehta,

[1] *Vide* "Address in Poona", Vol. II, p. 136.

[2] This is evidently a slip; the year was 1901.

[3] For Gandhiji's speech while moving the resolution, *vide* Vol. III, pp. 213-5.

best among the lovers of God, has shown in what that spirit consists :

> Vain, vain all spiritual effort
> Without meditation on the Self.

He said this out of his own vast experience. It tells us that religion does not necessarily dwell even in the man of great austerities or a great yogi who knows all the procedures of Yoga. I have not the least doubt that Gokhale was wise in the truth of the Self. He never pretended to observe any religious practice but his life was full of the true spirit of religion. Every age is known to have its predominant mode of spiritual effort best suited for the attainment of *moksha*. Whenever the religious spirit is on the decline, it is revived through such an effort in tune with the times. In this age, our degradation reveals itself through our political condition. Not taking a comprehensive view of things, we run away with the belief that, if but our political conditions improved, we would rise from this fallen state. This is only partially true. To be sure, we cannot rise again till our political condition changes for the better; but it is not true that we shall necessarily progress if our political condition undergoes a change, irrespective of the manner in which it is brought about. If the means employed are impure, the change will be not in the direction of progress but very likely the opposite. Only a change brought about in our political condition by pure means can lead to real progress. Gokhale not only perceived this right at the beginning of his public life but also followed the principle in action. Everyone had realized that popular awakening could be brought about only through political activity. If such activity was spiritualized, it could show the path to *moksha*. He placed this great ideal before his Servants of India Society and before the whole nation. He firmly declared that, unless our political movement was informed with the spirit of religion, it would be barren. The writer who took notice of his death in *The Times of India* drew particular attention to this aspect of Gokhale's mission and, doubting if his efforts to create political *sannyasis* would bear fruit, warned the Servants of India Society, which he left as his legacy, to be vigilant. In this age, only political *sannyasis* can fulfil and adorn the ideal of *sannyasa*, others will more likely than not disgrace the *sannayasi*'s saffron garb. No Indian who aspires to follow the way of true religion can afford to remain aloof from politics. In other words, one who aspires to a truly religious life cannot fail to undertake public service as his mission, and we are today so much caught up in the political machine that service of the people is impossible without

taking part in politics. In olden days, our peasants, though ignorant of who ruled them, led their simple lives free from fear; they can no longer afford to be so unconcerned. In the circumstances that obtain today, in following the path of religion they must take into account the political conditions. If our sadhus, *rishis, munis*, maulvis and priests realized the truth of this, we would have a Servants of India Society in every village, the spirit of religion would come to prevail all over India, the political system which has become odious would reform itself, India would regain the spiritual empire which, we know, it enjoyed in the days gone by, the bonds which hold India under subjection would be severed in an instant, and the ideal state which an ancient seer described in his immortal words would come into being : "Iron would be used not for forging swords but for forging ploughshares, and the lion and the lamb would be friends and live together in love." Gokhale's ideal in his life was to labour to bring about this state of affairs. That, indeed, is his message and I believe that whoever reads his writings with an open mind will recognize this message in every word of his.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Gopal Krishna Gokhalenan Vyakhyano, Vol. I

123. SPEECH AT BHAGINI SAMAJ, BOMBAY[1]

[*February 20, 1918*]

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF BHAGINI SAMAJ,

I am thankful to you for asking me to preside over this annual function of the Samaj. Your president, I really feel, should be a woman, though you may seek men's help or advice in your work. The Samaj is dedicated to the noble aim of women's regeneration and, in the same way that another's *tapascharya* does not help one to ascend to heaven, men cannot bring about the regeneration of women. I don't mean to suggest that men do not desire it, or that women would not want to have it through men's

[1] Gandhiji presided over the annual gathering of the Bhagini Samaj, a women's welfare organization of Bombay, held in the Morarji Gokuldas Hall. The report of the speech in *The Hindu* is incomplete; the paragraphs not found in it are supplied here from the Gujarati report in *Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti*, and marked by an asterisk.

help; I merely wish to place before you the principle that it is only through self-help that an individual or a race can rise. This is not a new principle, but we often forget to act upon it.*

The Samaj is at present kept going by the enthusiasm of Bhai Karsandas Chitalia. I am looking forward to a time when one of you will take his place and release him from this Samaj for other work. Having dedicated his life wholly to the service of women, he will find out some work in the same field. The Samaj will come into its own when it elects its office-bearers from among its women members and gives a better account of itself than it does today. I have close associations, as you know, with both men and women, but I find that I can do nothing in the way of service to women without help from women workers. That is why I take every occasion to protest in no uncertain terms that, so long as women in India remain ever so little suppressed or do not have the same rights [as men], India will not make real progress. Hence it will be all to India's honour if this Samaj succeeds completely in its aims.*

It is necessary to understand what we mean when we talk of the regeneration of women. It presupposes degeneration and, if that is so, we should further consider what led to it and how. It is our primary duty to have some very hard thinking on these points. In travelling all over India, I have come to realize that all the existing agitation is confined to an infinitesimal section of our people who are really a mere speck in the vast firmament. Crores of people of both the sexes live in absolute ignorance of this agitation. Full eighty-five per cent of the people of this country pass their innocent days in a state of total detachment from what is going on around them. These men and women, ignorant as they are, do their bit in life well and properly. Both have the same education or, rather, the absence of education, both are helping each other as they ought to do. If their lives are in any sense incomplete, the cause can be traced to the incompleteness of the lives of the remaining fifteen per cent. If my sisters of the Bhagini Samaj will make a close study of the lives of these 85 per cent of our people, it will provide them ample material for an excellent programme of work for the Samaj.

In the observations that I am going to make, I will confine myself to the 15 per cent above mentioned and, even then, it would be out of place to discuss the disabilities that are common both to men and women. The point for us to consider is the degeneration of our women relatively to our men. Legislation has been mostly the handiwork of men; and man has not always been fair and discriminate in performing that self-appointed task.

What the authors of the various *smritis* have said about women can in no wise be defended. Child-marriage, the restrictions on widows and such other evils owe their origin to the injunctions in the *smritis*. Women's being placed on a level with Sudras has done unimaginable harm to Hindu society. These statements of mine may have verbal similarity with the occasional attacks of Christians, but, apart from this similarity, there is no other common ground between us. The Christians, in their attacks, seek to strike at the roots of Hinduism. I look upon myself as an orthodox Hindu and my attack proceeds from the desire to rid Hinduism of its defects and restore it to its pristine glory. The Christian critic, by demonstrating the imperfection of the *smritis*, tries to show that they are just ordinary books. My attempt is to show that the imperfection of the *smritis* comes from interpolated passages, that is to say, verses inserted by persons accepted as *smritikaras*[1] in the period of our degeneration. It is easy to demonstrate the grandeur of the *smritis* minus these verses. I do not have the slightest desire to put up a weak defence of Hinduism, believing out of false pride or in ignorance, and wanting others to believe, that there is no error in the *smritis* or in the other accepted books of the Hindu religion. I am convinced that such an effort will not raise the Hindu religion but will degrade it rather. A religion which gives the foremost place to truth can afford no admixture of untruth.*

The largest part of our effort in promoting the regeneration of women should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our shastras as the necessary and ingrained characteristics of women. Who will attempt this and how? In my humble opinion, in order to make the attempt we will have to produce women, pure, firm and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from Hindu society as is being paid to their prototypes of yore. Their words will have the same authority as the shastras. We will feel ashamed of the stray reflections on them in our *smritis* and will soon forget them. Such revolutions have occurred in Hinduism in the past and will still take place in the future, leading to the stability of our faith. I pray to God that this Samaj might soon produce such women as I have described above.

We have now discussed the root cause of the degeneration of our women and have considered the ideals by the realization of which the present condition of our women can be improved. The

[1] Authors of *smritis*

number of women who can realize those ideals will be necessarily very few and, therefore, we will now consider what ordinary women can accomplish if they will try. Their first attempt should be directed towards awakening in the minds of as many women as possible a proper sense of their present condition. I am not among those who believe that such an effort can be made through literary education only. To work on that basis would be to postpone indefinitely the accomplishment of our aims; I have experienced at every step that it is not at all ncessary to wait so long. We can bring home to our women the sad realities of their present condition without, in the first instance, giving them any literary education.

I am just returning from a district of Bihar. I once met there a large group of women from respectable families of the place. They all observed purdah. In my presence, they removed the purdah as they would in the presence of a brother. These women had had no education. Just before I went to meet them, an English woman had been to see me. She had called on me where I sat surrounded by a number of men. To meet the Hindu women, on the other hand, I had to go into a room specially set apart. Half seriously, I suggested that we could go to the room where the men were sitting. All enthusiasm, they said that they would be only too happy to do so, but that the custom being what it was, they would need the men's permission. They did not like the purdah at all [they said] and wanted me to see that the custom was ended. While there is tragedy in these words, they also bear out what I have said above. These women had realized their condition without having had any literary education. They were right in asking my help, but I wanted them to have the strength themselves to win their freedom and they admitted, too, that they had such strength. I have come away full of hope that we shall soon hear that these women have flung away the purdah. Women who would ordinarily be considered uneducated are doing excellent work in Champaran. They are waking up their extremely backward sisters to the freedom which they themselves enjoy.*

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the very minutest detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of things and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have.

Many of our movements stop half-way because of the condition of our women. Much of our work does not yield appropriate results; our lot is like that of the penny-wise and pound-foolish trader who does not employ enough capital in his business.

If I am right, a good many from among you, members of this Samaj, should go out to educate your ignorant sisters about their real condition. In practical terms, this means that you should spare as much time as you can to visit the most backward localities in Bombay and give the women there what you have yourselves received. If you have joined men in their religious, political and social activities, acquaint them with these. If you have gained any special knowledge about the bringing up of children, impart it to them. If you have studied and realized in your own experience the benefits of clean air, clean water, clean and simple food, and exercise, tell these women about them too. In this way, you will raise yourselves and them.*

But although much good and useful work can be done without a knowledge of reading and writing, yet it is my firm belief that you cannot always do without a knowledge thereof. It develops and sharpens one's intellect and it stimulates our power of doing good. I have never placed an unnecessarily high value on the knowledge of reading and writing. I am only attempting to assign its proper place to it. I have pointed out from time to time [that] there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny to them equal rights on the grounds of their illiteracy; but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them; again, the true knowledge of self is unattainable by the millions who are without such education. Many a book is full of innocent pleasure and this will be denied to us without education. It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal. Education, therefore, is necessary for women as it is for men. Not that the methods of education should be identical in both cases. In the first place, our State system of education is full of error and productive of harm in many respects. It should be eschewed by men and women alike. Even if it were free from its present blemishes, I would not regard it as proper for women from all points of view. Man and woman are of equal rank, but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair, being supplementary to one another; each helps the other so that without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived, and, therefore, it follows as a necessary corollary from these facts that anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of them both. In fram-

ing any scheme of women's education, this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married pair and, therefore, it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman and, therefore, in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Not that knowledge should be divided into watertight compartments or that some branches of knowledge should be closed to any one; but unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.

I should say a word or two as to whether English education is or is not necessary for our women. I have come to the conclusion that, in the ordinary course of our lives, neither our men nor our women need necessarily have any knowledge of English. True, English is necessary for making a living and for active association in our political movements. I do not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial enterprise. The few women who may require or desire to have English education can very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. Introduction of English education in schools meant for women could only lead to a prolongation of our helplessness. I have often read and heard people saying that the rich treasures of English literature should be opened alike to men and women. I submit in all humility that there is some misapprehension in assuming such an attitude. No one intends to close these treasures against women while keeping them open for men. There is none on earth able to prevent you from studying the literature of the whole world if you are fond of literary tastes. But when courses of education have been framed with the needs of a particular society in view, you cannot supply the requirements of the few who have cultivated a literary taste.

Their needs can be met, after we are fully developed, by separate institutions as in Europe. When, through a well-planned scheme, large numbers of men and women begin to receive education and those who remain without it are looked upon as exceptions, we shall have plenty of writers in our languages to bring to us the pleasures of other literatures. If we seek the pleasure of literature always in English, our languages will remain poor, which means that we shall remain a poor people. The habit of deriving enjoyment only from a foreign literature is, I must say, if you will pardon me the simile, like the thief's habit of deriving pleasure from stolen goods. The pleasure which Pope found in the

Iliad he placed before the people in English of superb beauty. The pleasure which Fitzgerald derived from the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam made him render it in English of such power that millions of Englishmen keep his poem with them as they do the Bible. The *Bhagavad Gita* filled Edwin Arnold with transports of joy; he did not ask the people to learn Sanskrit in order that they may have the same joy, but put the work into English which would stand beside Sanskrit or Pali, pouring his very soul into the language, and thus shared his joy with his people. Our being so very backward is a reason why such work should be undertaken among us on a much larger scale. This will be possible only when a scheme such as I have suggested has been formulated and is firmly adhered to. If only we can give up our infatuation with English and our lack of confidence in ourselves or in the capacity of our languages, the task is not difficult.*

In asking our men and women to spend less time in the study of English than they are doing now, my object is not to deprive them of the pleasure which they are likely to derive from it, but I hold that the same pleasure can be obtained at less cost and trouble if we follow a more natural method. The world is full of many a gem of priceless beauty; but then those gems are not all of English setting. Other languages can well boast of productions of similar excellence; all these should be made available to our common people and that can only be done if our own learned men will undertake to translate them for us in our own languages.

Merely to have outlined a scheme of education as above is not to have removed the bane of child-marriage from our society or to have conferred on our women an equality of rights. Let us now consider the case of our girls who disappear, so to say, from view after marriage. They are not likely to return to our schools. Conscious of the unspeakable and unthinkable sin of the child-marriage of their daughters, their mothers cannot think of educating them or of otherwise making their dry life a cheerful one. The man who marries a young girl does not do so out of any altruistic motives, but through sheer lust. Who is to rescue these girls? A proper answer to this question will also be a solution of the woman's problem. The answer is albeit difficult, but it is the only one. There is, of course, none to champion her cause but her husband. It is useless to expect a child-wife to be able to bring round the man who has married her. The difficult work must, therefore, for the present at least, be left to man. If I could, I would take a census of child-wives and would find the friends of their husbands and through such friends, as well as through moral and polite exhortations, I

will attempt to bring home to them the enormity of their crimes in linking their fortunes with child-wives and will warn them that there is no expiation for that sin unless and until they have by education made their wives fit not only to bear children but also to bring them up properly, and unless, in the meantime, they live a life of absolute celibacy.

Thus there are many fruitful fields of activity before the members of the Bhagini Samaj for devoting their energies to. The field for work is so vast that, if resolute application is brought to bear thereon, the wider movements for reform may, for the present, well be left to themselves and great service can be done to the cause of Home Rule without so much as even a verbal reference to it. When printing presses were non-existent and scope for speech-making very limited, when one could hardly travel twenty-four miles in the course of a day instead of a thousand miles as now, we had only one agency for propagating our ideals and that was our 'acts'; and acts had immense potency. We are now rushing to and fro with the velocity of air, delivering speeches, writing newspaper articles, and yet we fall short of our accomplishments and the cry of despair fills the air. I for one am of opinion that, as in old days, our acts will have a more powerful influence on the public than any number of speeches and writings. It is my earnest prayer to your Association that its members should give prominence to quiet and unobtrusive work in whatever it does.

The Hindu, 26-2-1918, and *Mahatma Gandhini Vicharsrishti*

124. LETTER TO G. S. ARUNDALE

[SABARMATI,]
February 21, 1918

I have your letter. Just now I am immersed in one or two difficult matters. Thoughts do not come to me for the asking. I have to make my mind play upon a subject before I can write anything readable on it. I can merely say that I shall bear your letter in mind and try to send you something. The odds are that I shall fail unless the things I am handling are finished before the expected time.[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] About this letter Mahadev Desai in his Diary writes: "This was intended for Arundale who, as Secretary of the National Education Promotion Society, requested Gandhiji to write an article for the Education Week. When Gandhiji

125. LETTER TO FLORENCE A. WINTERBOTTOM[1]

[SABARMATI,]
February 21, 1918

I have allowed weeks to pass by without writing to you. Surely you know the reason why. Before telling you something about my activity, I want to answer an important question you have asked —a question which shows how closely you have been following my doings in this part of the world. You have reminded me of what I used to say in London, viz., that benign autocracy was the best form of Government, and have asked me how I reconcile [this with] my activity in connection with the Home Rule movement. I still retain the position held by me in London. But that form of Government is an impossibility today. India must pass through the throes of Parliamentary Government and, seeing that it is so, I naturally support a movement which will secure the best type of Parliamentary Government and replace the present bastardism which is neither the one nor the other. What is more, I take part in the movement only to the extent that I can enforce and popularize principles which, I know, must permeate all systems if they are to be of any use. Natesan's publication, a copy of which I have taken the liberty of asking him to send on to you, contains a translation of my address to the Gujarat Political Conference, which will more fully illustrate what I mean. I have delayed [writing] for one week hoping to deal with other matters. I must, however, no longer do so, but take some other opportunity of writing further.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

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came to know that the last date for giving the article was February 20, he said 'Thank God for this relief', and asked me to write to Arundale: 'I can't send an article before the date given by you because I received your letter only yesterday.' In a letter written at about this time to Sly, Gandhiji says, 'Anything dropping out is a positive relief.' "

[1] Secretary of the Union of Ethical Societies, whom Gandhiji met in London in 1906 and 1909; *vide* Vol. VI, pp. 157 & 170 and Vol. IX, pp. 282 & 285-6.

126. LETTER TO GORDHANDAS PATEL

[SABARMATI,]
February 21, 1918

DEAR SHRI GORDHANBHAI[1],

The most respected Anasuyabehn, Shankarlal Banker and I have just returned from a meeting of workers. They said the mill-owners wanted them to give something in writing in return for a concession of eight annas. I have told them not to affix their signature to any document without consulting their advisers and also that we would advise them in a day or two what increase they could reasonably demand. They would serve their interests well, I told them, if they went by our advice and accepted the suggested figure. I politely explained yesterday to members of the Mill group my responsibility in the matter. I think the principle of arbitration is of far-reaching consequence and it is not at all desirable that the mill-hands should lose faith in it.[2] I find it impossible, therefore, to run away from this duty which has come to me unsought. Shankarlal Banker and Vallabhbhai Patel agree with me. It is not desirable, from the workers' point of view and yours, in fact from that of us all, that they remain without work, in a state of uncertainty. Banker has collected figures of what the Bombay mills pay. I shall be obliged if you send me, without delay, a statement of the wages paid by the local mills. I should also be happy if the Mill group could favour us with its views on the different categories of workers without in any way binding itself to accept our decision. If any of you could join us in our deliberations without being committed in any way, our conclusions would be the more reasoned for that. I am not particularly disposed to favour workers as workers; I am on the side of justice and often this is found to be on their side. Hence the general belief that I am on their side. I can never think of harming the great industry of Ahmedabad. I hope, therefore, that your Association will extend its full co-operation to us in this difficult

[1] Secretary, Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association

[2] An Arbitration Board representing both parties to the dispute, with the Collector as Umpire, had been set up on February 14. The workers in some mills, however, went on strike owing to a misunderstanding.

task.[1] I should be happy to have an immediate reply to this letter. I have told the workers that, if possible, we would announce the results of our deliberations by Wednesday at the latest. Hence this hurry.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

127. CABLE TO A. H. WEST[2]

[AHMEDABAD,
About *February 24, 1918*][3]

YOU MAY ENFORCE YOUR PLAN. GOOD LUCK.

Extract from a photostat of West's original typewritten letter: G. N. 7605

128. LETTER TO G. K. DEODHAR

NADIAD,
February 26, 1918

MY DEAR DEODHAR[4],

I have your two letters and the report. I do feel that you have unconsciously injured the cause and have allowed yourself to be made a tool in Mr. Pratt's hands. You have based your statement about the undervaluation on the part of the *raiyats* on totally insufficient data. Amritlal Thakkar[5], who went into

[1] On a study of the wage-scales in Ahmedabad and Bombay, Gandhiji later came to the conclusion that a 35 per cent increase in wages would be a fair demand. The mill-owners failed to assist Gandhiji with a definite opinion on this basis. The situation deteriorated.

[2] To Gandhiji's proposal, in his letter of December 10, 1917, that West resort to agriculture for a living, the latter replied by cable as follows: "Agriculture impossible. Will you lend Sam myself jobbing plant, papers, earn living Durban? Ultimately complete independence. Paper published English Gujarati Phœnix. Management editorship same time being. Cable reply." Gandhiji responded as above.

[3] In his letter of March 3, 1918, quoting the cable, West had acknowledged having received it a week earlier.

[4] Gopal Krishna Deodhar (1879-1935); prominent worker of Sevasadan a women's social service organization of Poona, and of the Servants of India Society

[5] 1869-1951; popularly known as Thakkar Bapa; devoted his life to the uplift of Harijans and aborigines.

details, does not think that 3½ annas is an undervaluation. You know that the official valuation has undergone manipulation.

And how can it be said that the substantial concessions have been made when we know that not a single concession has yet been made? He was simply with us when Mr. Pratt said that postponement would be granted when the *rabi*[1] was over 25%. Do you realize that *rabi* does not include cotton, tobacco, *tuvar*[2] and *diveli*[3]?

Where was the necessity for publishing the report at all? When I entered upon the scene, you might well have left the judging of the moment of publication to me.

Lastly, why think that we can only gain what the officials give? Why not feel that we *must* get what we deserve?

I feel that you are not doing justice to yourself or the cause you handle by attempting too much. You are ailing. You have more irons in the fire than you can handle. You should have boldly said you could not undertake the inquiry.

I know you will not misunderstand my letter. I love you too well to do you conscious injustice. The best expression I can give to my regard for you is to open out the door to my heart and let you see what there is. No friend can do more. He who does less is so much the less a friend.

You ought to listen to my prayer and give Amritlal to the work in Gujarat. He will render great services to the Society because he will shine most in the work in Gujarat. The council work can be done somewhat by a man who has a head about him. The pariah work can only be done by a man with a heart to guide his head. A[mritlal] is that man.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

129. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

February 26, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 1[1]

The lock-out commenced on February 22. From that date the workers of the Weaving Department have been compelled to go without work. When the mill-owners issued notices withdrawing the Plague Bonus and there was unrest because of this, the employers resolved to get the dispute settled by arbitration and it was assumed that the workers would agree. Accordingly, the mill-owners resolved, on February 14, to appoint an arbitration board to decide what increase in lieu of the Plague Bonus was justified by the increase in the cost of living. Mahatma Gandhi, Shri Shankarlal Banker and Shri Vallabhbhai Patel representing the workers, and Sheth Ambalal Sarabhai, Sheth Jagabhai Dalpatbhai and Sheth Chandulal representing the employers, with the Collector as Chairman, were appointed to arbitrate. Thereafter, workers in some of the mills struck work owing to a misunderstanding. That was a mistake and the workers were ready to rectify it. The employers, however, thought that the workers were in the wrong in striking before the Award was given by the arbitrators and that, therefore, they would be justified in cancelling their resolution regarding arbitration and this they did. They simultaneously passed a resolution to the effect that workers be paid their due wages and be discharged if they were not content with a 20 per cent increase. The weavers were not satisfied and accepted discharge, and the lock-out by the employers commenced. But the arbitrators for the workers felt it their responsibility to tell the workers, under the circumstances, what increase they could properly

[1] Apart from visits to workers' houses and public meetings for educating the workers about the struggle, it was decided to "issue instructive leaflets every day with a view to fixing firmly in their minds the principles and significance of the struggle, and to supply them with simple but elevating literature which would conduce to their mental and intellectual development and enable them to leave for posterity a heritage of the means for its progress." The leaflets were issued in the name of Anasuyabehn Sarabhai but, as stated by Mahadev Desai in *Ek Dharmayuddha*, of which *A Righteous Struggle* was the English edition, they were in fact written by Gandhiji. This leaflet appeared on the fifth day of the lock-out. The leaflets were read out at the public meetings in the evenings.

demand. But before doing so, they consulted amongst themselves and, after giving full consideration to the interests of both the mill-owners and the workers and to all the other circumstances, decided that an increase of 35 per cent was justified and and that the workers be advised accordingly. But before doing so they intimated their intention to the mill-owners and promised to consider if they had anything to say against it. The employers did not express their view on this matter. The workers, whose demand was for a 50 per cent increase, withdrew it and resolved to ask for a 35 per cent increase.

WORKERS' PLEDGE

The workers have resolved:

(1) that they will not resume work until a 35 per cent increase on the July wages is secured;

(2) that they will not, during the period of the lock-out, cause any disturbance or resort to violence or indulge in looting, nor damage any property of the employers or abuse anyone, but will remain peaceful.

How the workers can succeed in their pledge will be discussed in the next leaflet.

If workers have anything to tell me[1], they are welcome to see me at my place at any hour of the day.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

129. LETTER TO COLLECTOR, KHEDA

February 26, 1918

I am satisfied from the inquiry which I have made myself, and from inquiries[2] made by other fellow-workers, that postponement of land revenue is justified, but if you are nevertheless unable

[1] Anasuyabehn, to whom workers frequently went for advice during the struggle

[2] On arrival at Nadiad, on February 16, Gandhiji and his fellow-workers had themselves divided into groups, each of which undertook investigation of crop conditions in a number of villages. In a week's time reports in regard to 425 out of 600 villages had become available and Gandhiji had personally investigated conditions in 30 villages. The findings formed the basis of his letter to the District authorities.

to accept our findings, there is, I suggest, still time to have the whole question examined by a Board of independent men representing both the Government and the public. I see that several thousands of agriculturists have paid up the first instalment because of the severe pressure brought to bear upon them and some have even paid up both instalments simultaneously. In order to do this, many were compelled to sell their cattle. I enclose herewith a statement[1] of the villages in which the crop has been 25 per cent or less and I trust that you will issue orders for the postponement of land revenue recovery.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

131. LETTER ON KHEDA SITUATION[2]

February 26, 1918

I read your letter on the Gujarat Sabha. It is the duty of all of us to do something for the people of Kheda. If the Sabha failed to discharge this duty, I think it would forfeit its right to its name.

The responsibility for the advice that is being given to the people is chiefly mine. Their case is that the crops have been less than four annas. The Government admits that, when the crop is less than four annas, no revenue can be collected from the ryots that year. If the Government does not grant the ryots' demands, they have only one course open to them and that is to refuse to pay revenue to the Government and even let it auction their properties.

Assessment is in proportion to the capacity of the land. It is quite plain that, if the land does not yield anything, no tax can be collected. The Government's regulation permitting payment by instalments is not a favour but an absolute necessity.

I perceive, however, that the difference of opinion between you and the Sabha on this issue is likely to remain. For public workers to tolerate such differences is but a part of their job. Both points of view may be placed before the people; it will then be for them to choose.

[1] This is not available.

[2] Particulars of the addressee are not known.

It seems self-evident to me that there is nothing unlawful if, to express one's sense of injustice, one refuses to pay a tax, in a perfectly civil manner, and lets it be collected [forcibly].

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

132. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS[1]

SABARMATI,
February 26, 1918

Today is the fifth day of the lock-out. Some of you probably think that everything will be all right after a week or two of suffering. I repeat that, though we may hope that our struggle will end early, we must remain firm even if that hope is not realized and must not resume work even if we have to die. Workers have no money but they possess a wealth superior to money—they have their hands, their courage and their fear of God. If a time comes when you have to starve, have confidence that we shall eat only after feeding you. We shall not allow you to die of starvation.[2]

Some workers say that we can demand more than 35 per cent. I say you can demand even a 100 per cent increase. But it would be unjust if you do so. Be content, in the present circumstances, with what you have demanded. If you ask for more, it will pain me. We cannot demand anything unreasonable from anybody. I think that the demand for 35 per cent is quite fair.[3]

[From Gujarati]
Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] The workers gathered every evening, during this time, under a *babul* tree on the banks of the Sabarmati. Gandhiji addressed them. Mahadev Desai records: "Very few except those who attended these meetings know what historic incidents occurred under that *babul* tree."

[2] The workers' advisers had taken a pledge to this effect.

[3] The rest of the speech is not available. Reports of speeches were deliberately withheld from the newspapers. Portions of Gandhiji's speeches and discourses on the subjects of the leaflets were given by Mahadev Desai in his book.

133. PRAYER DISCOURSE AT ASHRAM[1]

February 27, 1918

I have always said that it is not only against Government that satyagraha can be employed. It can be employed in any situation, against any person or body. We see examples of this just now. In Kheda, satyagraha has been going on against the Government and in Ahmedabad against the rich and also against the scriptures on the issue of the untouchables. My feeling is that we are bound to win on all these issues. Truth is on our side. In Kheda, the Government was high-handed and we had no option but to offer satyagraha against it. If we don't succeed, the reason will be our own limitations and not anything inherent in satyagraha. We succeeded in Bihar because there I got very sincere co-workers. Here I don't see the same sincerity, but I am having more than I had expected. The situation that has developed in Ahmedabad is also very heart-warming. I feel like repeating to you what the Collector told me yesterday, something which I have not mentioned anywhere else. I think I can say it in the Ashram. The Collector did not mean it as mere formality; he said what he really felt. For the first time in his life, he said, he saw here a struggle between workers and mill-owners conducted with mutual regard. I, too, don't think I have ever observed as good relations between the parties as here. As you see, Shri Ambalal[2] is on the other side in this struggle but he dined here yesterday. When I told him that he was to do so again today, he understood my meaning. He saw why I wanted him to dine with me and immediately agreed. What could be more beautiful than this? If we have the firmness and purity and display the single-minded devotion which the circumstances require, I think we shall not fail. I am not in a position to keep you informed of all that is happening; you will be the better able to maintain self-discipline for not being so informed. In the present situation, we have only to get ready to work, if required. All that we need to do for the purpose is to cultivate firmness and self-discipline.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] It was customary for Gandhiji to address the gathering at the early morning prayers.

[2] Ambalal Sarabhai

134. *AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE*

February 27, 1918

Leaflet No. 2

We saw in yesterday's leaflet what the workers' pledge was. We have now to consider what we should do to carry out that pledge. We know that the employers have crores of rupees and the workers have nothing. If workers have no money however, they have hands and feet with which they can work, and there is no part of the world which can do without workers. Hence, if only he knows it, the worker holds the key to the situation. Wealth is unavailing without him. If he realizes this, he can be sure of success. But the worker who would wield such power must possess certain qualities of character, without which he would be at the mercy of others. Let us see what these qualities are.

1. The worker should be truthful. There is no reason for him to tell a lie. Even if he tells a lie, he will not get the desired wage. The truthful man can be firm and a worker who is firm is never defeated.
2. He should possess courage. Many of us become permanent slaves through fear of what might happen to us if we lost our jobs.
3. He should have a sense of justice. If he asks for wages higher than his deserts, there will be hardly anyone who will employ him. The increase we have demanded in this struggle is reasonable. We should, therefore, have faith that sooner or later we are bound to get justice.
4. He will not be angry with his employer nor bear him any grudge. After all, when everything is over, the worker is to serve under him. Every human being is liable to err. We think the employers are in the wrong in refusing the increase asked for. If we remain straightforward till the end, the employers are sure to revise their attitude. At present they are angry. Also, they suspect that, if the present demands of the workers are granted, they will repeatedly harass them. To remove this suspicion, we should do our utmost to reassure the employers by our behaviour. The first thing to that end is to harbour no grudge against them.
5. Every worker should remember that the struggle is bound to involve suffering. But happiness follows suffering voluntarily undertaken. It is but suffering for the worker to be denied a wage sufficient to enable him to make both ends meet. Because of our

ignorance, however, we endure this and manage to live somehow. Seeking a remedy against this suffering, we have told the employers that it is not possible for us to maintain ourselves without the wage increase demanded and that, if it is not granted to us and we are not saved from continuous starvation, we would rather starve right now. How long will the employers remain unmoved by our suffering?

6. Lastly, the poor have their saviour in God. Our duty is to make the effort and then, fully assured that we are bound to get what He has ordained for us, remain peaceful while our request is not yet granted.

A worker who behaves in this manner will never find it difficult to keep his pledge. We shall discuss in tomorrow's leaflet how the workers may maintain themselves during the period of the lock-out.

[From Gujarati]
Ek Dharmayuddha

135. LETTER TO SHUAIB QURESHI

February 27, 1918

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am ashamed of myself. I am most anxious to be there. Yet the facts seem to have conspired against me. The strike is still on and it is of such a delicate nature that I dare not leave it. The Kaira affair, too, involving as it does the rights of several lacs of people, demands my attention. I know that delay about Ali brothers is dangerous. I therefore stay where I am till I feel free. I know you will not have me do otherwise. Will you please apologize to Maulana Saheb? Do please keep me informed of what goes on there.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

136. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

February 27, 1918

CHI. RAMDAS,

I keep worrying about you these days. I detect a note of despondency in your letters. It seems you feel the want of education. You feel, too, that you have not settled down to anything. If only you were with me, I would take you on my lap and comfort you. In the measure in which I fail to make you happy, I think I must be wanting in something. There must be something lacking in my love. Please think of any wrongs I may have done as unintended and forgive me. Children are entitled to much from their parents, being all submission to them. A mistake on the part of the parents will ruin their lives. Our scriptures place parents on a level with God. It is not always that parents in this world are fit to carry such responsibility. Being but earthly, they pass on the legacy to their children and so from generation to generation mere embodiments of selfishness come into this world. Why should you think that you are an unworthy son? If you are so, don't you see that that would prove that I was unworthy? I don't want to be reckoned as unworthy; how could you be so then? You may work for money, but you will not sacrifice truth for its sake and, though you have been thinking of marriage, you will exercise your judgment; and hence I, for my part, will always think of you as a worthy son.

You need not ask my forgiveness. You have given me no reason to be unhappy. I want you to come over to me after your experiments there are over. I shall do my part to see you married. If you want to study, I shall help you. If you but train your body to be as strong as steel, we shall see to the rest. At the moment, we are scattered wide apart. You there, Manilal in Phœnix, Deva in Badharwa, Ba in Bhitiharwa, Harilal in Calcutta, and myself ever on the move from place to place. Maybe, in this separation lies service to the nation and the way to spiritual uplift. Whether that is so or not, let us bear with a cheerful mind what has fallen to our lot.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

137. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

February 27, 1918[1]

There are but few to give you good advice and courage. Many will try to discourage you, and these may include even your friends. Many will advise you to accept as much as you can get and be thankful to God for it. This sounds sweet but really it is very bitter advice. We must not admit helplessness except before God. Do not feel helpless even if you have no money, since, in any case, we have hands and feet, all of us. We shall be masters of our own affairs only if we use our hands and feet. We have to be firm, moreover, in order that we may have good standing with the mill-owners. In the circumstances in which we are placed, we should tell them that we are not prepared to submit to such pressure from them. You may seek my advice or that of somebody else; in this matter, however, you can succeed without help from anyone. I and a hundred thousand more cannot bring you success. Your success depends on yourselves, upon your sincerity, upon your faith in God and upon your courage. We are merely your helpers. You have to stand on your own strength. Stand by your unwritten and unspoken pledge and success is yours.[2]

If you had accepted defeat from the beginning, I would not have come to you, nor would have Anasuyabehn; but you decided to put up a fight. The news has spread all over India. In due course, the world will know that Ahmedabad workers have taken a pledge, with God as their witness, that they will not resume work until they have achieved their object. In future, your children will look at this tree and say that their fathers took a solemn pledge under it, with God as their witness. If you do not fulfil that pledge, what will your children think of you? The future of your posterity depends on you. I urge you all, do not allow yourselves to be dissuaded by anyone and give up the pledge; stand by it firmly. You may have to starve to death. Even so, you should declare that you have taken the pledge with God as your witness; you have taken it not because Gandhi wanted you to do so, but in the name of God. Stand by your pledge faithfully and continue the struggle. India will then see that you were prepared to be ruined but did not

[1] The speech was delivered on the sixth day of the lock-out.

[2] The observations that follow related to the leaflet issued on the day.

give up your pledge. Remember each word in these leaflets and keep the pledge conscientiously. There is no point in knowing them by heart mechanically. Many can repeat parrot-like the Holy Koran or the *Gita*; some can recite both the *Gita* and the Tulsi *Ramayana*. It is not enough, though, that one knows them by heart. If, having learnt them by heart, you put the teaching into practice, rest assured that none can whittle down your 35 per cent even by a quarter per cent.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

138. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI PATEL

[After *February 27, 1918*]

BHAISHRI RAOJIBHAI,

Bhai Ambalal's[2] death teaches us that we cannot afford to be slack even for a moment on the path of service [that we follow]. The King of Death may send his summons any time and, therefore, if we are content only to build castles in the air about national service but have no particular desire to exert ourselves, we may have to leave empty-handed and all our aspirations will have been to no purpose. Give my condolences to the people whom Ambalal has left behind and tell them that the right way of cherishing his memory is to take his character as a model for us.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Jivanana Jharna

1 Complete text of the speech is not available.

2 A member of the Charotar Education Society and its first secretary

139. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

February 28, 1918

Leaflet No. 3

We have stated what the workers' pledge is and considered how best they may fulfil it. Today we shall discuss how the workers may keep themselves occupied during the lock-out. There is a proverb among us that an idle man busies himself with mischief. And so it is not at all good that ten thousand men should remain idle here in Ahmedabad. A man who has been working all day feels quite lost if he suddenly finds himself without work. The subject of this leaflet, therefore, is very important to us if we are to succeed in our aim. Let us start by saying what the workers ought not to do :

1. They should not waste time in gambling.
2. They should not spend it sleeping during the day.
3. They should not keep talking, all the time, of the employers and the lock-out.
4. Many are in the habit of frequenting tea-stalls and idling away their time in gossip or eating and drinking when they don't need to. Workers should keep away from such tea-stalls.
5. They should not go to the mills while the lock-out continues.

Now about what the workers should do :

1. Many workers' dwellings and their surroundings are generally dirty. They are unable to attend to this when they are at work. Now that they will have an enforced holiday, they should utilize some of the time in cleaning and repairing their houses and compounds.

2. Those who are literate should spend their time in reading books and increasing their knowledge. They can also teach the illiterate. This way, they will learn to help each other. Those who are fond of reading should go to the Dadabhai Library and Reading-Room or other free reading-rooms.

3. Those who know skilled work, such as tailoring, cabinet-making, or wood-carving and engraving, can seek work for themselves. If they fail to find any, they may approach us for help.

4. Every person ought to have some knowledge of a subsidiary occupation besides the one from which he earns his livelihood. Workers, therefore, can spend their time in learning some new and easy work. They will have our help in this.

In India, a person in one occupation thinks it below his dignity to follow any other. Besides, some occupations are considered low and degrading in themselves. Both these ideas are wrong. There is no question of inferiority or superiority among occupations which are essential for man's existence. Nor should we be ashamed of taking up an occupation other than the one we are used to. We believe that weaving cloth, breaking stones, sawing or splitting wood or working on a farm are all necessary and honourable occupations. We hope, therefore, that instead of wasting their time in doing nothing, workers will utilize it in some such useful work.

Having considered what workers should do, it is necessary to say what they may expect of me. We shall say this in the next leaflet.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

140. LETTER TO F. G. PRATT

SABARMATI,
February 28, 1918

DEAR MR. PRATT,

Your frank talk of yesterday[1] encourages me to send you this letter.

The following is the position throughout India. A new order of things is replacing the old. It can be established peacefully or it must be preceded by some painful disturbances. What it will be lies largely in the hands of civil servants like yourself, more than in those of the King's representatives quite at the top. You desire to do good, but you rule not by right of love, but by the force of fear. The sum total of the energy of the civil service represents to the people the British Constitution. You have failed, probably not through any fault of your own, to interpret it to the people as fully as you might have. The result is the people dread your power to punish and they miss the good you desire to do. The home-rulers so named have become impatient of your authority. They are a rapidly increasing power. They find no difficulty in showing to the people the dreadful side of the civil service rule. The people

[1] Evidently, Gandhiji had an interview with the Commissioner on February 27, but no report of the discussion is available.

welcome them as their deliverers. With nothing but love of the land and distrust of the officials to guide them, they spread ill will. The order you represent knows this only too well and it naturally resents this insult. And so the gulf widens. I presumptuously believe that I can step into the breach and may succeed in stopping harmful disturbances during our passage to the new state of things. I want, at the end of it, to see established not mutual distrust and the law of force, but mutual trust and the law of love. I can only do so if I can show the people a better and more expeditious way of righting wrongs. It is obviously bad if they submit to your order through fear and harbour ill will. It is worse if, misguided, they resort to violence. The only dignified and truly loyal and uplifting course for them is to show disapproval by disobeying your orders which they may consider to be unjust, and by knowingly and respectfully suffering the penalty of their breach. I venture to think that advice to do so can be safely tendered in almost every conceivable case of a felt wrong, provided that all other recognized remedies have been previously tried. I wish you could see the viewpoint submitted by me. You will, I know, forgive me for my presumption in writing this letter. Of course, I have written this irrespective of the Kaira trouble. It is highly likely that I shall have the privilege of working with you on a more non-contentious platform. But I feel that it is better that you should know me with all my limitations.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

141. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

February 28, 1918

The heat and the strength acquired in breaking stones are not to be had by handling a pen.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] Gandhiji made this observation while commenting on the last paragraph of Leaflet No. 3. The rest of the speech is not available.

142. *AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE*

March 1, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 4

We have said how workers can fulfil their pledge and what they should do during the lock-out. In this leaflet we shall explain how we propose to help them. It is our duty to do this.

LET US STATE, FIRST, WHAT WE CANNOT DO :

(1) We shall not help the workers in doing anything which is wrong.
(2) We shall have to abandon the workers and cease helping them if they do anything wrong or make inflated demands or commit violence.
(3) We can never wish ill to the employers; in all that we do, we are bound to consider their interests. We shall promote the workers' interest while duly safeguarding the employers'.

NOW ABOUT WHAT WE SHALL DO FOR THE WORKERS :

(1) We are with the workers so long as they conduct themselves well, as they have done so far.
(2) We shall do all we can to obtain for them 35 per cent increase in wages.
(3) We are, as yet, only entreating the employers. We have not tried so far to win public sympathy or educate public opinion. But we shall be prepared, if the situation demands it, to acquaint the whole of India with the workers' plight and hope that we shall succeed in obtaining public sympathy for our cause.
(4) We shall not rest till the workers get what they are entitled to.
(5) We are making an effort to inform ourselves of the condition of the workers in its economic, moral and educational aspects. We shall show the workers how they may improve their economic condition; we shall strive to raise their moral level; we shall think out and teach them ways and means of living in cleanliness and we shall work for the intellectual improvement of such of them as live in ignorance.
(6) We shall not ourselves eat or dress without providing food and clothing to such of the workers as are reduced to destitution in the course of the struggle.[1]

[1] The following formed part of the advisers' pledge: "If in this struggle any persons are reduced to starvation and are unable to get work, we shall feed and clothe them before we feed and clothe ourselves."

(7) We shall nurse the sick among them and get for them the services of vaids and doctors.

We have undertaken this task with a full sense of our responsibility. We consider the workers' demand to be entirely reasonable and it is because we believe that satisfaction of their demand will eventually serve rather than harm the employers' interests that we have taken up this cause.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

143. LETTER TO SIR E. A. GAIT

SABARMATI,
March 1, 1918

SIR E. A. GAIT[2]
LT.-GOVERNOR OF BIHAR & ORISSA
PATNA

Your kind letter of the 18th ultimo has been redirected here.[3] I have been wandering about in Gujarat attending to one or two rather delicate questions. Hence the delay in replying. Sir Frank Sly's version is quite correct and, as soon as the Bill becomes law, I shall endeavour to have the suits withdrawn. When we discussed the matter, we had not contemplated legalization of the agreement. Now that the enhancements are being legalized,

[1] Mahadev Desai in *A Righteous Struggle*, observes: "Every word contained in this leaflet was carried out literally."

[2] Sir Edward Albert Gait, Lt.-Governor, 1915-20

[3] Sir Edward Gait had written: "In connection with the legislation to carry out the recommendations of the Champaran Agrarian Committee, Messrs Norman and Hill say that a number of suits are still pending with their *raiyats* in which the *sharahbeshi* enhancement is disputed. We referred the matter to Mr. Sly, who says that the question of pending suits was discussed at the meeting between the Committee and the representative planters, and that you then agreed on behalf of the *raiyats* that such suits should be settled in accordance with the terms of the agreement, the *raiyats* no longer contesting the legality of *sharahbeshi* and paying the recorded rent in full up to *Fasli* 1325. Mr. Sly says he is sure that you will support him on this point, and, if so, I would ask you kindly to induce the *raiyats* to carry out the agreement which you made on their behalf."

subject to reduction after the year 1325[1], the planters' protection will not rest solely on my influence with the *raiyats*. I would nevertheless strain every nerve to see that the cases are withdrawn without resort to law. There is just a possibility of a few *raiyats* proving obdurate.

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

144. LETTER TO AMBALAL SARABHAI

SABARMATI,
March 1, 1918

DEAR FRIEND,

Early this morning as I got up, I fell thinking what we were after. What would be the issue of what I had been doing? And of what you had been doing? I suppose, if I succeeded, you would accept the workers' demands; alternatively, if you hold firm till the last, the mill-hands will take to other occupations. If they go back on their resolve and accept the wages proposed by you, my efforts will have ended in nothing. These results, however, have no serious consequences for the people.

What about your efforts, though? If you succeed, the poor, already suppressed, will be suppressed still more, will be more abject than ever and the impression will have been confirmed that money can subdue everyone. If, despite your efforts, the workers succeed in securing the increase, you, and others with you, will regard the result as your failure. Can I possibly wish you success in so far as the first result is concerned? Is it your desire that the arrogance of money should increase? Or that the workers be reduced to utter submission? Would you be so unkindly disposed to them as to see no success for you in their getting what they are entitled to, may be even a few pice more? Do you not see that in your failure lies your success, that your success is fraught with danger for you? How if Ravana had succeeded? Do you not see that your success will have serious consequences for the whole

[1] *Fasli* year, the harvest era introduced by Emperor Akbar, equivalent to 1918

society? Your efforts are of the nature of *duragraha*[1]. My success everyone will accept as success. My failure, too, will not harm anyone; it will only prove that the workers were not prepared to go farther than they did. An effort like mine is satyagraha. Kindly look deep into your heart, listen to the still small voice within and obey it, I pray you. Will you dine with me?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

145. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

March 1, 1918[2]

Hitherto we have discussed the workers' pledge and what the workers are to do. We have now to declare in writing what our pledge is and what we have decided to do. We shall tell you what you should expect from us and what, in the sight of God, we have been planning to do. Whenever you see us committing mistakes or slackening in our efforts to carry out our pledge, you can confront us with it and censure us.[3]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

146. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 2, 1918

LEAFLET No. 5

We have so far considered the situation from our point of view. It is rather difficult to do so from that of the employers. Workers' efforts may have one of these two results :

[1] Holding on to wrong, as opposed to satyagraha, holding on to truth. The mill-owners remained obstinate at this time. Mahadev Desai thus analysed the situation: ". . .it appeared that the non-acceptance of the workers' demand by the employers was not due to their inability to pay 35 per cent, but to sheer obstinacy. They had adopted this perverse attitude fearing that if once the workers succeeded, they would be a source of constant nuisance and the advisers of labour would get a permanent footing."

[2] The speech evidently refers to Leaflet No. 4.

[3] The rest of the speech is not available.

1. They may get a 35 per cent increase in wages, or
2. They may have to resume work without getting such increase.

If the workers get an increase, they will be benefited and the employers will have earned credit. If they have to resume work without any increase, they will be demoralized and obliged to bow before the employers as so many slaves. It is, therefore, in the interests of both sides that the workers get an increase. At any rate, a defeat will cost the workers very much indeed.

Employers' efforts too may have one of these two results:

1. They may concede the wrokers an increase.
2. They may not do so.

If the employers concede it, the workers will be contented and justice will have been done to them. The employers are afraid that, if the workers' demands are conceded, they will become overbearing. This fear is baseless. Even if workers are suppressed today, it is not impossible that, when opportunity arises, they will take to such ways. It is even possible that the workers, on being suppressed, will become vindictive. The history of the world shows that, wherever the workers have been suppressed, they have risen in revolt later when they got an opportunity. The employers feel that conceding the workers' demand will strengthen their advisers' influence on them. If the advisers are right in their stand, if they are devoted to the cause, the workers will never leave them whether they are defeated or victorious, and be it noted that the advisers also will not abandon the workers. Those who have dedicated themselves to service of others will not forsake it even if they have to incur the displeasure of those whom they oppose. The more cause for disappointment they have, the more devoted will they become in their service. Strive as they may, the employers will never succeed in dividing the advisers from the workers. What, then, will they get by defeating the workers? The only reply can be: nothing but the workers' discontent. The employers will always distrust the suppressed workers.

By granting the increase as demanded, the employers will have contented workers. If the latter fail in their duty, the employers can always rely on the help of the advisers; this way, they can end the loss now being caused to both sides. The workers, on their part, will ever remain grateful if their demand is met and there will be increased goodwill between them and the employers. Thus, the employers' success lies in that of the workers; and the latter's defeat, likewise, will be their defeat. As against this way of

pure justice, the employers have adopted the Western, or the modern, Satanic notion of justice.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

147. *AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE*

[*March 3, 1918*][1]

LEAFLET NO. 6

Pure justice is that which is inspired by fellow-feeling and compassion. We in India call it the Eastern or the ancient way of justice. That way of justice which has no place in it for fellow-feeling or compassion is known as Satanic, Western or modern justice. Out of compassion or regard, son and father concede many things to each other to the eventual benefit of both. One takes pride in giving up a claim and thinks of one's action as proceeding from strength, not weakness. There was a time in India when servants, passing from father to son, used to serve in the same family for generations. They were regarded and treated as members of the family. They suffered with the employers in their misfortunes and the latter shared the servants' joys and sorrows. In those days, India was reputed for a social order free from friction, and this order endured for thousands of years on that basis. Even now this sense of fellow-feeling is not altogether absent in our country. Where such an arrangement exists, there is hardly any need for a third party or an arbitrator. Disputes between a master and a servant are settled between themselves amicably. There was no room in this arrangement for increase or reduction in wages according as the changing needs of the two might dictate. Servants did not ask for higher wages when there was a dearth of servants and masters did not reduce wages when servants were available in plenty. This arrangement was based primarily on considerations of mutual regard, propriety, decorum and affection. This sense of mutual obligation was not then, as it is now, considered unpractical but ruled us in most of our affairs. History records that many great things have been achieved by our people

[1] Leaflets numbered 5 and 8 have been assigned by Mahadev Desai to March 2 and March 5, respectively. Leaflets numbered 6 and 7 fall naturally on March 3 and March 4.

because they had made this pure justice the law of their life. This is the Eastern or ancient justice.[1]

A totally different way of life prevails in the West today. It is not to be supposed that all persons in the West approve of the modern idea of justice. There are many saintly persons in the West who lead a blameless life, adopting the ancient standard. But in most public activities of the West at present, there is no place for fellow-feeling or compassion. It is considered just that a master pays his servant what he thinks fit. It is not considered necessary to think of the servants' needs. So also the worker can make his own demand, irrespective of the employer's financial condition and this is considered just. It is just, they think, that everyone should look after his own interests and expect others to take these into account. The present war in Europe is fought on the same principle. No means is considered improper for defeating the enemy. Wars must have been fought even in the past, but the vast masses of the people were not involved in them. We would do well not to introduce into India this despicable idea of justice. When workers make a demand merely because they think themselves strong enough to do so, regardless of the employers' condition, they will have succumbed to the modern, Satanic idea of justice. The employers, in refusing to consider the workers' demands, have accepted this Satanic principle of justice, maybe unintentionally or in ignorance. The employers ganging up against the workers is like raising an army of elephants against ants. If they had any regard for dharma, the employers would hesitate to oppose the workers. You will never find in ancient India that a situation in which the workers starved was regarded as the employers' opportunity. That action alone is just which does not harm either party to a dispute. We had confidently hoped that the Jain and *Vaishnava* employers in the capital city of this worthy land of Gujarat would never consider it a victory to beat down the workers or deliberately to give them less than their due. We are sure this wind from the West will pass as quickly as it has come. At any rate, we do not want to teach the workers what they do in the West these days. We wish to follow, and to

[1] Mahadev Desai wrote, in regard to these observations: "Gandhiji had published these ideas years ago in *Indian Opinion* in his article on *Sarvodaya* based on Ruskin's book, *Unto This Last*. The same ideas, having matured in course of time, he discussed in these leaflets in simple, direct and forceful language." *Vide* Vol. IX, pp. 478-81 *et seq*.

make the workers follow, our ancient idea of justice as we have known it and to help them in that manner to secure their rights.

We shall consider, in the next leaflet, some of the evil consequences of the policy followed in the West in modern times.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

148. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

AHMEDABAD,
Maha Vad 5 [March 3, 1918]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

Santok and Ramdas arrived here yesterday. They will leave for Rajkot tomorrow.

Shri Khushalbhai and Narandas are against letting Krishna and Purushottam go, and so the idea has been given up. I too thought they were right. If Purushottam goes to Rajkot, we must also let him go to Morabi. If Krishna goes to Rajkot this time, we should have to let others, too, go to their own places. I thought, therefore, that, though you would have liked them to go, [it would be better] not to let them, especially as the elders, too, were of the same mind . . . .[2]

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5733

149. FRAGMENT OF LETTER[3]

March 3, 1918

BHAISHRI,

. . . We are so terribly anxious to live on that the hour of death—especially of those dear to us—always fills us with fear. I, for my part, have always felt that such occasions are in the nature of a real test for us. Anyone who is even faintly alive to the reality of the *atman* understands the true meaning of death.

[1] According to Mahadev Desai, this and some of the succeeding leaflets were intended not only for the workers but also for the employers. Their aim was to convert the mill-owners, if possible, as much as to educate the workers.

[2] The available text of the letter is incomplete.

[3] The name of the addressee is not known.

Why should such a one grieve needlessly? There is nothing new in these thoughts but, if recalled to us in the hour of misfortune, they bring us consolation. I state them in the hope that they will do this service to you.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

150. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

March 3, 1918

x x x[1]

It bores me to see people blindly worshipping me. If they know me as I am and even then honour me, I can turn their honour to account in public work. I desire no honour if I have to conceal my religious beliefs in order to have it. I would even welcome being utterly despised for following the right path. . . .[1]

There are a thousand things we desire. Knowing that one cannot have them all, one must be at peace.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

151. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 4, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 7

South Africa is a large British Colony. The Europeans have been settled there for over four hundred years. They enjoy autonomy. Many European workers are employed in the railways of that country. These workers felt that they did not receive just wages. Instead of merely trying to get their wages increased, they thought of capturing the Government. That was unjust; it was Satanic justice. It increased the bitterness between the Government and the labour, and the whole of South Africa was in the grip of fear. Nobody felt secure. Ultimately, there was even open fighting between the parties and some innocent persons were killed. The military took over control everywhere. Both parties suffered heavily. Each desired to defeat the other. Neither

[1] Some portion has been omitted in the source.

cared for justice as such. Each side magnified the other's misdeeds. Neither had regard for the feelings of the other.

While this was going on, our workers behaved justly. When the railway strike was launched, a strike involving 20,000 Indian workers had already begun. We were fighting the Government of that country for justice, pure and simple. The weapon our workers employed was satyagraha. They did not wish to spite the Government, nor did they wish it ill. They had no desire to dislodge it. The European workers wanted to exploit the strike of the Indians. Our workers refused to be exploited. They said, "Ours is a satyagraha struggle. We do not desire to harass the Government. We will, therefore, suspend our struggle while you are fighting." Accordingly, they called off the strike.[1] We may call this true justice. Eventually, our workers succeeded and the Government, too, got credit because it did justice by accepting our demands. Our workers obeyed sentiment and did not seek to take advantage of the opponent's embarrassment. The end of the struggle saw better mutual regard between the Government and the people and we came to be treated with more respect. Thus, a struggle fought on the basis of true justice benefits both sides.

If we conduct our struggle on the same basis, with a sense of justice, if we bear no malice towards the employers and ask only for what is our right, not only shall we win but there will also be increased goodwill between the workers and the employers.

Another thing to observe from this instance is that, in satyagraha, both the sides need not be followers of truth. Even if one side alone follows it, satyagraha will finally succeed. The party moreover, which fights with bitterness will lose its bitterness when this is not returned by the other side. If a man violently swings his hand in the air, he only strains it thereby. Similarly, bitterness is fed only by bitterness.

We may, therefore, rest assured that, if we fight on with firmness and courage, we are bound to win in the end.

Tomorrow we shall consider some instances of satyagraha.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] *Vide* Vol. XII, pp. 322-3.

152. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

March 4, 1918[1]

Just as our workers did not take advantage of the difficulties of the Government of South Africa, created by the strike of the European workers, but earned praise for themselves by suspending their campaign and thereby helping the Government, in the same way we should not seek to harass the mill-owners by taking advantage of any sudden crisis in their affairs but should run to their rescue.[2]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

153. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 5, 1918

LEAFLET No. 8

In this leaflet, we are not going to talk about satyagrahis who have won fame in the world. It would be more profitable for us and inspire us with strength to know what suffering common men like ourselves have found it possible to go through. Imam Hassan and Hussain were bold and resolute satyagrahis. We revere their names, but merely calling their examples to mind does not help us to become satyagrahis. We feel that there can be no comparison between our capacity and theirs. An equally memorable name is that of the devotee Prahlad. But we think that we are not capable of such devotion, resoluteness, love for truth and courage and so, in the end, we remain what we have been. Therefore, let us on this occasion think of what other persons like ourselves have done. Such a satyagrahi was Hurbatsingh[3]. He was an old man of 75 years. He had gone to South Africa on a five-year contract to work on an agricultural farm on a monthly wage of seven rupees. When the strike of 20,000 Indians, referred to in the last leaflet, commenced, he also joined it. Some strikers were jailed, and Hurbatsingh was among them. His companions pleaded

[1] The speech was delivered on the eleventh day of the lock-out.

[2] The rest of the speech is not available.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XII, pp. 319-21, 390, 447 & 475.

with him and said, "It is not for you to plunge into this sea of suffering. Jail is not the place for you. No one can blame you if you do not join such a struggle." Hurbatsingh replied: "When all of you suffer so much for our honour, what shall I do by remaining outside? What does it matter even if I die in jail?" And, verily, Hurbatsingh died in jail and won undying fame. Had he died outside, no one would have noticed his death. But, as he died in jail, the Indian community asked for his dead body and hundreds of Indians joined his funeral procession.

Like Hurbatsingh was the Transvaal business man, Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia. By the grace of God he is still alive, and lives in South Africa where he looks after the Indian community and safeguards its honour. During the struggle in which Hurbatsingh sacrificed his life, Cachalia went to prison several times. He allowed his business to be ruined and, though he now lives in poverty, is respected everywhere. He saved his honour, though he had to pay heavily for it.

Just as an old labourer and a middle-aged business man of repute stood by their word and suffered, so also did a girl of seventeen years. Her name was Valliamah[1]. She also went to jail for the honour of the community during that same struggle. She had been suffering from fever when she was imprisoned. In jail, the fever became worse. The jailer advised her to leave the jail, but Valliamah refused and with an unflinching mind completed her term of imprisonment. She died on the fourth or the fifth day after her release from jail.

The satyagraha of all the three was pure. All of them suffered hardships, went to jail but kept their pledge. There is no such cloud hanging over us. The utmost we have to suffer by keeping our pledge is to give up some of our luxuries and pull on somehow without the wages we earned. This is no very great task. It should not be difficult for us to do what our own brothers and sisters in our own time have done.

We shall consider this matter a little further in the next leaflet.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] Valliamah Moonsamy; *vide* Vol. XII, pp. 390, 446,447, 474-5 & 486-7

154. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

March 5, 1918[1]

In going to jail and defying the Government, these three sought nothing for themselves. These sisters and brothers of ours did not have to pay the tax. Cachalia was a big merchant and did not have to pay it. Hurbatsingh had migrated before the tax was imposed, so he, too, did not have to pay it. The law imposing the tax had not been brought into force at the place where Valliamah lived. And yet all these joined the struggle with the rest for the sake of the honour of Indians in South Africa. Your struggle, on the other hand, is for your own good. It should, therefore, be easier for you to remain firm. May their example strengthen you and make you resolute.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

155. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 6, 1918

Leaflet No. 9

Yesterday we discussed the examples of three satyagrahis; they were not the only satyagrahis in that struggle. Twenty thousand workers were out of work at a time, and the trouble was not over within twelve days. The entire struggle lasted for seven years and during that period hundreds of men lived under great suspense and anxiety and stuck to their resolve. Twenty thousand workers lived homeless and without wages for three months. Many sold whatever goods they had. They left their huts, sold their beds and mattresses and cattle and marched forth. Hundreds of them marched 20 miles a day for several days, each getting on only on $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. of flour and an ounce of sugar. There were Muslims as well as Hindus among them. One of them is the son of the Muezzin of the Jumma Masjid of Bombay. His name is Imam Saheb Abdul Kadir Bawazeer[2]. He who had never suffered

[1] The remarks evidently refer to leaflet No. 8, and were made on this date.
[2] *Vide* Vol. X, pp. 158 & 161.

any hardship before endured the rigours of jail life, labouring, during his terms of imprisonment, on cleaning roads, breaking stones, etc., and for months lived on tasteless and simple food. At present he has not a pie with him. The same is true of Dadamiya Kaji of Surat. Two seventeen-year-old youngsters from Madras, Narayansamy[1] and Nagappen suffered to the utmost and sacrificed their lives, but did not give in. In this same struggle, we may note, women who had never done any manual work before went round hawking and laboured as washerwomen in jails.

Remembering these examples, will any worker among us not be prepared to suffer some inconvenience to keep his pledge?

In the leaflets issued by the employers, we find that, in their anger, they have said many unworthy things; many things have been exaggerated, maybe unintentionally, and a few twisted. We may not meet anger with anger. It does not seem right even to correct the mis-statements in them. It is enough to say that we should not allow ourselves either to be misled or provoked by such statements. If the allegations made against the advisers of the workers are true, merely contradicting them here will not prove them false. We know that they are untrue but, rather than attempt to prove them so here, we shall rely on our future behaviour to furnish the proof.

Tomorrow we shall say something which has a bearing on this point.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

156. LETTER TO MILLIE GRAHAM POLAK

SABARMATI,
March 6, 1918

DEAR MILLIE[2],

I am here attending to the Kheda trouble as also a big strike. My passive resistance is therefore beginning to have full play in all the departments of life. These two things detain me in Ahmedabad. I am sending Henry some papers about it directly.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XII, pp. 390, 446, 447 & 486-7.
[2] Wife of H. S. L. Polak

I have been watching his career. Nothing that Henry does in this direction will surprise me. I should feel sad if I found him doing less. He will feel the loss of Sir Wm. Wedderburn[1]. But he has not left this world before his time. Do you write to Mr. Ambalal? He is the most stubborn opponent in the strike.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

157. LETTER TO G. K. DEODHAR[2]

[AHMEDABAD,]
Wednesday, March 6, 1918

Do by all means come and we shall discuss. Meanwhile, we must agree to differ. I have come in close touch with both Messrs Pratt and Ghosal and I think I know them. I suppose we shall have to [be] content with half your usefulness. He who remains sick half the time of his life is only half useful. Is he not? You will not do the one thing needful to regain health.

Very sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

158. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

March 6, 1918

It was not intended as a rebuke to you. If there was any rebuke in its humour, it was due to Mahadev. I had no part in it whatever. I have had nothing but satisfaction from your work. I have never felt dissatisfied. There are many things yet which I should like to have done by you.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi

[1] President of Indian National Congress, 1910; *vide* Vol. I, p. 386.

[2] Deodhar, in replying to Gandhiji's letter of February 26, 1918, had refused to accept the latter's observations regarding him, and complained of his ill-health. This was Gandhiji's rejoinder.

159. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 7, 1918[1]

LEAFLET NO. 10

In the situation in which we are placed, it is quite necessary to examine the point mentioned in the preceding leaflet. It is just about a fortnight since the lock-out commenced, and yet some say that they have no food, others that they cannot even pay rent. The houses of most of the workers are found to be in a very unsatisfactory condition. They are without proper ventilation. The structures are very old. The surroundings are filthy. The clothes of the workers are dirty. Some wear such clothes because they cannot afford to pay the washerman, others say that they cannot afford soap. The workers' children just play about in the streets. They go without schooling. Some of the workers even set their tender children to work for money. Such extreme poverty is a painful thing indeed. But a 35 per cent increase will not by itself cure it. Even if wages were to be doubled, in all likelihood the abject poverty would remain unless other measures were also adopted. There are many causes for this poverty. We shall consider some of them today. Questioning the workers, we learn that when they are short of money they pay interest ranging from one anna to four annas per rupee per month. The very thought of this makes one shudder. Anyone who agrees to pay such interest even once will find it extremely difficult to extricate himself. Let us consider this a little. Interest on sixteen rupees at one anna per rupee is one rupee. People who pay interest at this rate pay an amount equivalent to the principal in one year and four months. This amounts to 75 per cent interest. Even twelve to sixteen per cent interest is considered exorbitant; how, then, can a man paying 75 per cent interest survive at all? Then, what shall we say of a man who pays four annas a month on a rupee? Such a person pays an amount equal to the principal in four months. This amounts to 300 per cent interest. People who pay interest at such rates are always in debt and are never able to extricate themselves. Prophet Mahomed had realized the crushing burden of interest and so it is that we find in the Holy Koran strict injunctions

[1] *Vide* the concluding sentence in Leaflet No. 9.

against charging interest. For similar reasons, the rule of *damdupat*[1] must have been prescribed in the Hindu scriptures. If, as part of the present struggle all workers take an oath not to pay such excessive interest, they will have an unbearable burden lifted from them. Nobody should pay interest at a rate higher than twelve per cent. Some may say : "It is all right for the future, but how shall we pay back what we have already borrowed on interest? We have this thing with us for a lifetime now." The best way out of this situation is to start co-operative credit societies of workers. We found some workers in a position to rescue their brethren who were being crushed under the weight of interest. Outsiders are not likely to take a hand in this. Only those who trust us will help us. The workers should risk everything to free themselves from this scourge. Paying such high rates of interest is a major cause of poverty. Probably all other causes count for less. We shall discuss this point later.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

160. LETTER TO MANSUKHLAL MEHTA

March 7, 1918

DEAR SHRI MANSUKHLAL,

I am not pained by your criticism. I do not make light of the Kathiawad problem. It seems so big to me that, for the present, it is beyond my capacity. It is not either that I have not thought about it. I have decided to leave it alone after full deliberation. Possibly, it is weakness on my part to have done so. In that case, I need strength first. That I cannot have as a gift from you. There should be a fire inside, and this is lacking.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] This stipulated that the interest should not be more than twice the principal.

161. LETTER TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

March 7, 1918

BHAI PRANJIVAN,

Be the outcome in the Kheda District what it may, the officials and the people are having a good education. There has been a tremendous awakening among the people. It was disloyalty even to talk of non-payment of taxes, but now people speak of it without fear. Those among the educated, who have been working as volunteers, have also immensely benefited. Men who had never seen a village got an opportunity now and went round nearly 600 villages. The Kheda matter is still not off our hands. Something of the same kind is going on between the workers and the mill-owners. I find myself being drawn into every field of Indian life. It is no small thing that, without our having to spend a single rupee, 10,000 labourers have remained peaceful; this is a fact. People have realized that there is nothing like self-help. In both these matters, success lies along the lines summed up in these two slogans : "You will win by your own strength, not ours", and "You will not win except through suffering deliberately endured."

x x x

Whether it is good or bad for you to expand your business[1] depends solely on the end in view. There is no depending on one's life. One may earn money to be able to do good, but, if death comes meanwhile, one would die full of regrets [over things undone]. If, on the other hand, making money is your only aim, if that is regarded as a good thing in itself, or, if it is believed that one should go on expanding one's business as a matter of duty just to make it more profitable, you must needs expand it.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Dr. Mehta had in mind engaging himself in the ship-building industry.

162. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

SABARMATI,
March 8, 1918

MY DEAR HENRY,

I have been most exact in writing to you. All I can therefore say is that my letters have gone astray. I have your second letter immediately on top of the first. So the first I have replied through Millie.

Now that you are editing *India*, I suppose you will send it to me regularly. *Hibbert's Journal* I have read. Malaria no longer troubles me. I am keeping very well.

If nothing reaches you from Hassan Imam, I shall speak to him.

As for my activities, I am asking Mr. Desai[1] to keep you informed. He has thrown in his lot with me. He is a capable helper and his ambition is to replace you. It is a mighty feat. He is making the attempt.

With love,

Yours,
BHAI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 3790

163. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SABARMATI,
Maha Vad 13 [March 10, 1918]

DEAR JAMNALALJI[2],

There has been delay in answering your letter. I have been tied up here in two big tasks. Please excuse me. If you think it proper to name the library after me, you may do so.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2836

[1] Mahadev Desai

[2] 1889-1942; a close associate of Gandhiji, identified with many of his activities; he chose a life of simplicity despite his wealth. Gandhiji called him his fifth son.

164. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 11, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 11

As days pass, leaflets misleading the workers continue to be issued. It is also rumoured that the lock-out is to be lifted on Tuesday, and that those workers who return will be taken back. We hear, besides, that any worker who persuades five or more other workers to go with him will be given a reward. Nothing needs to be done to counter these tactics. Employers are entitled to get the workers back to work by employing others to persuade them. But what is the workers' duty? They have stated that an increase of 20 per cent is not adequate and have given notices accordingly. They have taken an oath not to accept anything less than 35 per cent. Placed in this predicament, unless a 35 per cent increase is granted, the workers cannot return to work except by violating their pledge, their honour and their manliness. It is possible, however, that every worker may not have such a sense of honour. Some may not even have taken such a pledge. A few hail from outside Gujarat and they may not even be attending meetings. It would be wrong even for such workers to go back to work with a 20 per cent increase. Our duty merely is to find out such unthinking workers and acquaint them with the true state of affairs. But let it be remembered that even they are not to be coerced in any way.

Tomorrow, i.e., on Tuesday[1], we are to meet at 7.30 in the morning at the usual place. The best way not to be tempted by the employers' reopening the mills is to attend the meeting as usual at 7.30 in the morning. You should also search out the workers from other parts of the country who live as strangers to you and who have hitherto not attended these meetings, and see that they attend them. In these days, when you are facing a temptation, all manner of thoughts will occur to you. It is a miserable thing for a working man to be without a job. The meetings will keep up the patience of all workers who feel so. For those who know their strength, there can be no enforced unemployment. In reality the worker can be so independent that, if he realizes his true worth, he will never worry about losing a job. The wealth of a

[1] This was March 12.

rich person may disappear or be stolen or be lost in a moment by mismanagement. Thanks to miscalculation, a rich man may have to face bankruptcy. But a worker's capital is inexhaustible, incapable of being stolen, and bound to pay him a generous dividend all the time. His hands and feet, the energy which enables him to work, constitute this inexhaustible capital of his and the wages constitute his dividends. The worker who invests more of his energy in work can easily earn more interest. An idle worker will certainly starve. Such a one may have reason for despair. The industrious has no reason to worry even for a moment. Let everyone be at the usual place in time on Tuesday and there you will learn better yet how independent you really are.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

165. LETTER TO JIVANLAL DESAI[1]

[AHMEDABAD,
Before *March 12, 1918*]

DEAR FRIEND,

Why should you have to persuade me?[2] Why do you even doubt that I would not do what you suggest, if I really could? I cannot afford to be obstinate. The world may misunderstand me, but you cannot. I am overwhelmed with sympathy. This lock-out is not a joke for me. I am doing all I can. All my activities and actions are motivated by the desire to find a speedy solution. But the mill-owner friends are prolonging the deadlock. Considering it useless to persuade me, why do you not try to persuade the mill-owners? They do not have to humiliate themselves. Is there anyone who will be happy at the workers' humiliation? Be assured that there will be no bitterness left between the educated class and the rich. We definitely have no desire to quarrel.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] Barrister and public worker of Ahmedabad

[2] At a crucial moment in the situation, when the mill-hands had begun to feel the real hardship of their struggle, counsels of despair were not wanting, seeking to persuade the workers to abandon it and compromise by accepting a 15 or 20 per cent increase in wages. This and the following letter were written before the lock-out ended on March 12.

166. *LETTER TO MANGALDAS PAREKH*[1]

AHMEDABA
[Before *March 12, 191*

Many friends come to me and try to persuade me that should somehow bring to an end the struggle between the worke and the mill-owners. I would certainly do so if I could, ev at the cost of my life. But that is not possible. It is in the han of the mill-owners to bring it to an end. Why make it a point prestige not to give 35 per cent because the workers have asked f it? Why is it taken for granted that I can get the workers accept anything I want? I claim that the workers are under n control because of the means I have adopted. Shall I now s to it that they break their pledge? If I do so, why should th not sever my head from my shoulders? I hear that the mill-owne find fault with me. I am unconcerned. Some day th themselves will admit that I was not in the wrong. There ca be no bitterness between them and me, since I am not going be a party to any bitterness. Even bitterness needs encourag ment; it won't get any from me. But why don't you participa in this? It does not become you merely to watch this gre struggle unconcernedly.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

167. *AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE*

[*March 12, 1918*]

LEAFLET NO. 12

Today a new chapter begins. The employers have decide to withdraw the lock-out and have expressed their willingness t take back those who are ready to accept a 20 per cent increase This means that today the employers' lock-out is at an end an a workers' strike has commenced. You have all seen the announce ment of the employers' resolution to this effect. They say in i that many workers are ready to resume work but could not d

[1] A prominent mill-owner of Ahmedabad

[2] The lock-out was lifted on March 12, 1918.

so owing to the lock-out. The information which the employers have received ill accords with the daily meetings of the workers and the oath they have taken. Either their information is true or the presence of the workers in the daily meetings and the oath they have taken are a fact. The workers bore all these things in mind before taking the pledge and now they cannot resume work without securing a 35 per cent increase, whatever the inducement held out and whatever the suffering they may have to go through. Their honour is at stake in this. If you weigh a pledge against a sum of hundreds of thousands, the pledge will be seen to be of greater consequence. We are sure the workers will never forget this. They have no other way to advance themselves except to stand by their oath and it is our conviction that, if only the employers realize it, their welfare too lies in the workers' keeping their oath. Eventually, even the employers will not gain by taking work from workers who are too weak to keep their oath. A religiously-minded person will never feel happy in forcing a person to break his pledge or associating himself with such an effort. We have, however, no time now to think of the employers' duty. They know it all right. We can only entreat them. But the workers must think seriously what their duty is at this time. Never again will they get an opportunity like the present one.

Let us consider what the workers are likely to gain by breaking their oath. These days, any honest person in India can earn twenty to twenty-five rupees a month by intelligent work. The worst that can happen to a worker is that his employers may dismiss him and he will have to look for other work. A thoughtful worker should realize that he will get work anywhere after a few days' search. We are sure, however, that the employers do not want to take this extreme step. If workers are firm in their resolve, even the hardest of hearts will relent.

It is possible that the workers from outside Gujarat (i.e., those from the North or the South) are not well informed about this struggle. In public work we do not, and do not wish to, make distinctions of Hindu, Muslim, Gujarati, Madrasi, Punjabi, etc. We are all one or wish to be one. We should, therefore, approach these workers with understanding and enlighten them about the struggle and make them see that it is to their advantage, too, to identify themselves with the rest of us.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

168. SUBSTANCE OF LETTER TO AMBALAL SARABHAI[1]

March 12, 191

I got your letter. I have destroyed it after reading it. never wished that there should be any pressure on the worker: If you send more details about who is bringing it on them, I wi certainly look into the matter. It is all the same to me whethe the mill-hands resume work or not. I have always given instruc tions not to use force to prevent any worker from going to h mill. I have certainly no desire that a labourer should be force against his will to keep away from it. I am even ready, mysel to escort any worker who says he wants to attend the mill. I ar altogether indifferent whether a labourer joins or does not join.

In view of the task you have set me, how can I accept th pleasure of staying with you? I should very much like to se your children. How is that possible at present, though? Let u leave it to the future.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

169. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 13, 191

LEAFLET NO. 13[2]

Rumours are afloat that many workers are willing to resum work, but that others prevent them by coercion and threats of phy sical assault. Workers should remember our pledge that, if they bring pressure to bear on their fellows and use threats to stop them from going to work, we shall not find it possible to help them. In this struggle, he alone will win who keeps his pledge. No one can be forced to do this. It is essentially a voluntary matter. We want to be faithful to our pledge and go ahead. If

[1] Mahadev Desai notes in the Diary that Gandhiji did not want a copy of this letter to be preserved, even in the Diary, but that he did not mind his summarizing it from memory.

[2] The leaflet was issued on the day following the ending of the lock-out.

a man, being afraid, ventures nothing, he can never advance. Such a one has lost everything. Let every worker, therefore, bear in mind that he is not to use pressure on others in any form or manner. If coercion is used, the whole struggle is likely to be weakened and will collapse. For the success of their struggle, the workers are to rely solely on the rightness of their demand and of their conduct. If their demand is unjust, they cannot succeed. The demand may be just. But even then the worker will lose his case despite all his suffering if, in securing it, he resorts to untruth or falsehood, to violence or coercion, or is apathetic. It is very essential in this struggle that workers do not resort to coercion and that they provide for their maintenance by putting in physical labour.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

170. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD MEETING[1]

March 13, 1918

I cannot do full justice, nor can anyone else for that matter, I am sure, to the task of introducing Mrs. Besant. I have known her for thirty years, having followed her activities since my youth, though of course I cannot claim that she has known me so long. "Home Rule" has become a household word all over India, in places big and small; the credit for this goes to this lady. I have often said that there have been, and there may still be, differences between her and me; there are quite a few even today. If I had the Home Rule movement under my charge, I would go to work differently. Having said this, I admit I cannot but look up to her with reverence, honour her, pay tribute to her for her excellent qualities, for she has dedicated her very soul to India. She lives only for India—to live thus is her sole aspiration. No matter if she commits hundreds of mistakes, we shall honour her. In my view, Ahmedabad has covered itself with unsurpassed honour by honouring one who has rendered such great services as she has. With regard to the subject of today's address, it seems the present audience is not likely to be much interested in it. Mrs. Besant told me a moment ago that she might manage to speak on swaraj before

[1] The meeting was arranged to hear Annie Besant on "National Education". Gandhiji was in the chair.

you, but that she wondered what she could say on nation education. There are not enough educated people in the auc ence. She will speak, all the same. I have her permission f speaking in Gujarati. Whatever I wish to tell you, I can s only in Gujarati. Her speech will later be summarized f you in Gujarati. The agitation she has launched in the prese circumstances has been useful in several ways. India has benefit from her work, her organizing ability and her eloquence; to hono her, the first thing to do is to hear her in silence.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 17-3-1918

171. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD MEETING[1]

March 13, 19

Gandhiji started by requesting the people to maintain silence a stressed the importance of being punctual at a meeting. He suggested tl anyone who turned up from that time onwards should remain outside the ga

The subject of today's speech concerns our own interest; it about swaraj. Wealth, honour, strength—all these follow fro swaraj. One statement of this lady deserves to be engraved in o hearts and in the Government's, that India would have Home Ru or go on hunger-strike. Everyone should ponder over this. Bei without political power, India is growing poorer and so abje is this poverty that thousands have been driven by it to inhum crimes. The idea of hunger-strike is intended to bring home to that a man who has been starving for some days would stop nothing. She is speaking today to explain this point. If some Mrs. Besant's detractors succeed against her, that is only becau she believes in action and has no interest except in her work. S has dedicated herself, body and soul, and all she has, to her m sion. She has put before us what she had to say but it is n by following her way that we shall succeed in swimming across the other side, we shall do so only by following our own. If t honour Ahmedabad has accorded her today is sincere, you shou pray to God that He may grant the strength she has to us as we And, with the same regard for her listen to her in silence. Thc who cannot follow English may read a translation tomorrow.

[1] Annie Besant addressed a second meeting in the evening, speaking on "C duty in the present political situation". Gandhiji presided.

Concluding the proceedings, Shri Gandhi suggested that her speech should be translated into Gujarati and copies of the translation distributed among the people. He described the speech as historic. He then read out the names of those who had presented Mrs. Besant with purses and thanked them. He advised everyone to ponder over her speech.

[From Gujarati]
Prajabandhu, 17-3-1918

172. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

[Before *March 15, 1918*][1]

It is not proper that you ridicule the machines and call them "empty show-cases".[2] These inanimate machines have done you no harm. You had your living through these very machines. I should like to tell our poets that we are not to use bitter words; we should not cast aspersions on the employers. It serves no purpose to say that the rich go about in motor-cars because of us. That way, we only lose our own self-respect. I might as well say that even King-Emperor George V rules because of us, but saying that reflects no credit on us. We do not establish our goodness by calling others bad. There is God above to keep watch over the wrong-doers. He will punish them. Who are we to judge? We need say no more than that the employers are wrong in not giving us the 35 per cent increase.[3]

[From Gujarati]
Ek Dharmayuddha

173. REPLY TO SYMPATHIZERS[4]

[Before *March 15, 1918*][5]

What is the meaning of satyagraha if you help the workers with money to carry it on or if, this time, they have joined it in the hope that you will support them with such help? What will be the value of such satyagraha? The essence of satyagraha

[1] The speech was evidently made before Gandhiji commenced his fast.
[2] One of the workers had recited at the meeting a satirical verse on machines.
[3] The rest of the speech is not available.
[4] It cannot be ascertained whether these remarks were made orally or were part of a letter.
[5] The suggestion and the reply seem to belong to the period before Gandhiji commenced his fast on this date.

lies in cheerful submission to the suffering that may follow The more a satyagrahi suffers, the more thoroughly he is test

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

174. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 15, 19

LEAFLET NO. 14

As the weapon of the rich is money, that of the workers their labour. Just as a rich man would starve if he did not e ploy his wealth, even so if the worker did not employ his wealth did not work—he would also starve. One who does not work not a worker. A worker who is ashamed of working has no rig to eat. If, therefore, the workers desire to fulfil their pledge in t great struggle, they should learn to do some work or other. Th who collect funds and, remaining idle, maintain themselves out them do not deserve to win. Workers are fighting for th pledge. Those who want food without working for it do not, may be said, understand what a pledge means. He alone can ke his pledge who can feel shame or has self-respect. Is there anyo who will not look down on those who desire to be maintain on public funds without doing any work? It behoves us, the fore, that we maintain ourselves by doing some work. If a work does not work, he is like sugar which has lost its sweetness. the sea-water lost its salt, where would we get our salt from? the worker did not work, the world would come to an end.

This struggle is not merely for a 35 per cent increase; it is show that workers are prepared to suffer for their rights. We a fighting to uphold our honour. We have launched on this strug in order to better ourselves. If we start using public funds i properly, we shall grow worse and not better. Consider the matt from any angle you choose, you will see that we must maintain o selves by our own labour. Farhad[2] broke stones for the sake Shirin, his beloved. For the workers, their pledge is their Shiri Why should they not break stones for its sake? For the sake truth, Harishchandra[3] sold himself; why should workers not suf

[1] The leaflet was issued on the day Gandhiji commenced his fast.

[2] Central figure in a Persian poem

[3] Legendary king of Ayodhya who went through many ordeals for the s of truth

hardships for upholding their pledge? For the sake of their honour, Imam Hassan and Hussain suffered greatly. Should we not be prepared even to die for our honour? If we get money while we remain idle at home and fight with that money, it would be untrue to say that we are fighting.

We hope, therefore, that every worker will work to maintain himself so that he may be able to keep his oath and remain firm. If the struggle lengthens, it will be because of weakness on our part. So long as the mill-owners believe that workers will not take to any labour and, therefore, will eventually succumb, they will have no compassion and will continue to resist [the demand]. So long as they are not convinced that workers will never give in, they will not be moved by compassion and will continue to oppose the workers even at the sacrifice of their own profits. When, however, they feel certain that the workers will, under no circumstances, give up their resolve, they will show compassion enough and welcome the workers back. Today the employers believe that the workers will not do any manual labour and so are bound to succumb soon. If the workers depend on others' money for their maintenance, the mill-owners will think that the source is bound to be exhausted sooner or later, and so will not take the workers seriously. If, on the other hand, workers who have no [other] means of subsistence begin to do manual work, the employers will see that they will lose their workers unless they grant the 35 per cent increase forthwith. Thus, it is for us to shorten or lengthen the struggle. We shall be free the sooner by enduring greater suffering just now. If we flinch from suffering, the struggle is bound to be protracted. Those who have weakened will, we hope, consider all these points and become strong again.

Special Instruction

Some workers are inclined to believe that those who have weakened cannot be persuaded to become strong. This is a wrong impression altogether. It is the duty of us all—yours and ours—to try, with gentleness, to persuade those who have weakened for one reason or another. It is also our duty to educate those who do not know what the struggle means. What we have been saying is that we may not use threats, tell lies, or resort to violence, or exert pressure in any manner to keep anyone away from work. If, despite persuasion, anyone resumes work, that is no reason for us to lose heart. Even if only one person holds out, we shall never forsake him.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

175. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

[*March 15, 191*

You must have heard what happened this morning. Son were shocked, others wept. I do not feel that there was anythi wrong, or anything of which I need be ashamed, in this morning development. I do not feel angry at the criticism made by tl residents of Jugaldas Chawl.[2] Rather, I, and others as well wl want to serve India, have much to learn from it. I have alwa believed that, if our capacity for *tapascharya* or voluntary sufferir is real enough, we are bound to reap the fruit. You took an oa relying on my advice. In this age the oath has lost its valu Men break their oath at any time and for any reason and I a grieved to have been instrumental in thus lowering the value an oath. There is nothing else that will bind a man as effective as an oath does. The meaning of an oath is that we decide do a particular thing with God in whom we believe as o witness. People who are on a higher plane can perhaps do wit out oaths, but we who are on a lower one cannot. We who fall thousand times cannot raise ourselves without oaths. You w admit that, had we not taken the oath and repeated it dail many of us would have fallen long ago. You yourselves have sa that never before have you known a strike as peaceful as thi The reason why some have fallen is that they are faced with sta vation. I would advise you to keep your oath even if you ha to starve, though it is our pledge, mine and my co-workers', th we will not allow you to starve. If we look on unconcernedly whi you are starving, you may give up your pledge by all mean There is one more thing we should have mentioned along wi these two. It is that if, while not allowing you to starve, we a you to beg, we would be guilty in the eyes of God and woul prove no better than thieves. But what should I do to persuac you to maintain yourselves with manual labour? I can do manu

[1] The speech was delivered on the evening of the day on which the fa commenced.

[2] Chhaganlal Gandhi had, the day before, gone to the Chawl to reque the workers to attend the morning meeting and had been rebuffed by them wi the remark: "What is it to Anasuyabehn and Gandhiji? They come and go their car; they eat sumptuous food, but we are suffering death-agonies; attendir meetings does not prevent starvation." This was reported to Gandhiji.

work, I have been doing it, and would do so even now; but I do not get the opportunity for it. I have a number of things to attend to, and can, therefore, do some manual work only by way of exercise. Will it behove you to tell me that you have worked on looms, but cannot do other physical labour? This notion has taken deep root in India. It is good as a principle that a man should specialize in one type of work only; but it would be improper to use this as an excuse. I have thought much about this. When I came to know of your bitter criticism of me, I felt that, if I wanted to keep you to the path of dharma and show you the worth of an oath and the value of labour, I must set a concrete example before you. We are not out to have fun at your cost or to act a play. How can I prove to you that we are prepared to carry out whatever we tell you? I am not God that I can demonstrate this to you in some way [other than by fasting]. I should very much like to do something which would convince you that you would have to be plain with me, that it would not do for you merely to act a part. Nobody can be induced or coerced to keep his oath. Love is the only inducement that can be offered. You must understand that he alone, who loves his religion, loves his honour and country, will refuse to give up his resolve . . . .

I am used to taking such pledges. For fear that people may wrongly imitate me, I would rather not take one at all. But I am dealing with hundreds of thousands of workers. I must, therefore, see that my conscience is clean. I wanted to show you that I was not playing with you.

I have attempted to show you by example that you should value your oath in the same manner as I have done. You have already done one thing. You could have said : "What have we to do with your oath, we cannot continue the fight, we must go back"; but you did not do so. You decided to accept our service. And I thought of you the more highly for that. It seemed a beautiful thing to me to sink or swim with you.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

[1] The rest of the speech is not available. Gandhiji's fast became a subject of serious concern. Prof. Anandshankar Dhruva who discussed it with Gandhiji doubted its efficacy for bringing about a real change of heart among the mill-owners. They strove to dissuade him; some offered to concede the demand for a 35 per cent increase for Gandhiji's sake, but, according to Mahadev Desai, he rejected it saying, "Do not give 35 per cent out of pity for me, but do so to respect the workers' pledge, and to give them justice."

176. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

[*March 16, 1918*[1]

LEAFLET No. 15

It is necessary to understand the motive and significance (Gandhiji's vow to fast. The first thing to remember is that th is not intended to influence the employers. If the fast were cor ceived in that spirit, it would harm our struggle and bring ι dishonour. We want justice from the employers, not pity for u If there is to be any pity, let it be for the workers. We belie\ that it is but the employers' duty to have pity for the worker But we shall be ridiculed if we accept 35 per cent granted out (pity for Gandhiji. Workers cannot accept it on that basis. Gandhiji exploited his relations with the employers or the peop in general in this manner, he would be misusing his position an would lose his good name. What connection could there possibl be between Gandhiji's fast and the issue of workers' wages Even if fifty persons resolve to starve themselves to death on tl employers' premises, how can the employers, for that reason, gi\ the workers a 35 per cent increase if they have no right to it If this becomes a common practice for securing rights, it would t impossible to carry on the affairs of society. Employers cann and need not pay attention to this fast of Gandhiji, though it impossible that Gandhiji's action will have no effect on them.

We shall be sorry to the extent the employers are influence by this action. But, at the same time, we cannot sacrifice oth far-reaching results that the fast may possibly bring about. L us examine the purpose for which the fast has been undertake Gandhiji saw that the oath was losing its force with the worke Some of them were ready to break their pledge out of fear of wh they thought would be starvation. It is intolerable that te thousand men should give up their oath. A man becomes we by not keeping a vow and ultimately loses his dignity as ma It is, therefore, our duty to do our utmost to help the worke to keep their oath. Gandhiji felt that, if he fasted, he would sho through this how much he himself valued a pledge. Moreove

[1] This leaflet appears to have been issued on the day following the fa On the next day, i.e., March 17, a leaflet was issued by Shankarlal Parikh and settlement was reached in the morning of March 18.

the workers talked of starvation. 'Starve but keep your oath' was Gandhiji's message to them. He at any rate must live up to it. That he could do only if he himself was prepared to die fasting. Besides, workers said they would not do manual labour, but said, all the same, they stood in need of financial help. This seemed a terrible thing. If the workers took up such an attitude, there would be utter chaos in the country. There was only one way in which Gandhiji could effectively teach the people to submit to the hardships of physical labour and this was that he himself should suffer. He did manual work, of course, but that was not enough. A fast, he thought, would serve many purposes, and so commenced one. He would break it only when the workers got 35 per cent or if they simply repudiated their pledge. The result was as expected. Those who were present when he took the vow saw this well enough. The workers were roused; they started manual labour and were saved from betraying what was for them a matter of religion.

The workers have now realized that they will secure justice at the hands of the employers only if they remain firm in their oath. Gandhiji's fast has buoyed them up. But they must rely on their own strength to fight. They alone can save themselves.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

177. *LETTER TO GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY*

[Before *March 17, 1918*]

I hope that on the basis of facts ascertained by me and my friends, and having regard to the hardships caused by the epidemic and plague and enhanced cost of living, either the recovery of land revenue would be postponed or an inquiry by an independent board would be made, such as the one I had originally asked for. But if this last request of mine is ignored and properties are confiscated or sold, or land forfeited, I shall be compelled to advise the peasants openly not to pay up land revenue.[1]

[1] Officials had coerced agriculturists saying that the crop yield was adequate to pay the revenue assessment. Gandhiji protested against this coercion. Commissioner Pratt repudiated the opinion expressed by Gandhiji and his associates, and insisted that the right course was for the farmers to pay up their dues. This was the background against which Gandhiji wrote to the Governor.

When I first entered Kheda district, I gave you the assuranc that I will let you know before taking any extreme step. I hop that you will bear in mind the various facts which I have set ou in this letter. If you desire to see me I shall come immediately.[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

178. PRAYER DISCOURSE IN ASHRAM[2]

March 17, 19

The step I have just now taken is a very grave one, but : the back of it there stands a great idea. It is grave because, c hearing of this all those who know me in India will be ve much pained, be almost in an agony of grief. But, at the san time, I have here an opportunity to convey to them a beautifi idea, and I should not miss it. This is the motive behind my actio: I have been getting quite impatient for the last two days to e plain it to you but I could not get enough quiet time for tha It would make me very unhappy to miss the morning and eve ing prayers in the Ashram. And, besides, yesterday the mus maestro dropped in and so I just would not forgo the pleasure hearing his strains. I have swum past many a lure but man hungers still persist in me. At present I get here all that I lor for by way of music and, therefore, although it was Anasuyabehn express wish yesterday that I should stay on there, I insisted c coming over to the Ashram. At a time like this, the music he has a very soothing effect on me. This is indeed the best occasic for me to unburden my soul to you. At other hours, you a likely to be busy with your work and to make you leave th and assemble here—that won't be proper either.

From the ancient culture of India, I have gleaned a tru which, even if it is mastered by the few persons here at th moment, would give these few a mastery over the world. Befo telling you of it, however, I should like to say another thin

[1] To this the Governor replied on March 17, as follows: "The Gover ment has been kept fully informed of what has been happening in the Khe district and is satisfied that the Collector and the other officers of the Reven Department while acting strictly according to rules and regulations have the int rests of the agriculturists at heart."

[2] In this Gandhiji has explained at length the reasons for his undertaking fast in connection with the mill-hands' strike.

At present, there is only one person in India over whom millions are crazy, for whom millions of our countrymen would lay down their lives. That person is Tilak Maharaj. I often feel that this is a great asset of his, his great treasure. He has written on the inner meaning of the *Gita*[1]. But I have always felt that he has not understood the age-old spirit of India, has not understood her soul and that is the reason why the nation has come to this pass. Deep down in his heart, he would like us all to be what the Europeans are. As Europe stands on top at present, as it seems, that is, to those whose minds are steeped in European notions—he wants India to be in the same position. He underwent six years' internment but only to display a courage of the European variety, with the idea that these people who are tyrannizing over us now may learn how, if it came to that, we too could stand such long terms of internment, be it five years or twenty-five. In the prisons of Siberia, many great men of Russia are wasting their whole lives, but these men did not go to prison in obedience to any spiritual promptings. To be thus prodigal of one's life is to expend our highest treasure to no purpose. If Tilakji had undergone the sufferings of internment with a spiritual motive, things would not have been as they are and the results of his internment would have been far different. This is what I should like to explain to him. I have often, with great respect, spoken about this to him, as much as I could, though I have not put the thing in so many words orally or in writing. I might have, in what I wrote, watered down my meaning, but Tilak Maharaj has so penetrating an intellect that he would understand. This is, however, no matter to be explained orally or in writing. To give him first-hand experience of it, I must furnish a living example. Indirectly, I have spoken to him often enough but, should I get an opportunity of providing a direct demonstration, I should not miss it, and here is one.

Another such person is Madan Mohan Malaviya. Amongst the present leaders of India, he is a man of the holiest character —that is, amongst political personages and amongst those whom we know. Unknown to us, there may be many such indeed. But although he is so holy in his life and so well informed on points of dharma, he has not, it seems to me, properly understood the soul of India in all its grandeur. I am afraid I have said too much. If he were to hear this, Malaviyaji might get angry with

[1] *Gita Rahasya,* which he wrote in Maṇḍalay Jail, serving a six-year term

me, even think of me as a swollen-headed man and take a dislike to me. But I feel no hesitation in saying what I do because it is quite true. I have spoken to him many times. I am bound to him by ties of affection and hence I have even indulged in frequent wranglings with him. At the end of all my arguments, however, he would merely say that all I had said might be true but that he was not convinced of it. I have this opportunity to provide him, too, with a direct demonstration. I owe it to both to show now what India's soul is.

For the last twenty days, I have been mixing with ten thousand mill-hands. In my presence, they took a pledge in the name of God. At the time, they did so with great enthusiasm. Whatever type of people they are, they all believe at any rate that God exists.

They thought that, when they had observed the pledge for twenty days, God was bound to come to their help. When that did not happen and God prolonged the test, their faith faltered. They felt that, led by this one man, they had suffered all these days but gained nothing whatever, that if they had not allowed themselves to be prevailed upon by him but had turned militant, they would have had their 35 per cent, or even more, in a much shorter time. This is my analysis of how their minds work. I can never bear to be in such a situation. That a pledge once taken, at my instance, should be so lightly broken and that faith in God should decline means certain annihilation of dharma. I simply cannot live to be a witness to this in any activity to which I am a party. I must impress upon the minds of the mill-hands what it is to take a pledge. I must show to them what I can do for a pledge; if I did not, I would be a coward. For a man who brags of clearing seven feet, not to clear even one is impotence. Well, then, to keep those ten thousand men from falling, I took this step. This was why I took the vow and its impact was electrifying. I had never expected this. The thousands of men present there shed tears from their eyes. They awoke to the reality of their soul, a new consciousness stirred in them and they got strength to stand by their pledge. I was instantly persuaded that dharma had not vanished from India, that people do respond to an appeal to their soul. If Tilak Maharaj and Malaviyaji would but see this, great things could be done in India.

I am at present overflowing with joy. When, on a former occasion, I took such a vow, my mind did not enjoy the peace it does today. I also felt at that time the pull of the body. This time I experience nothing of the kind. My mind is filled with

profound peace. I feel like pouring forth my soul to you all but I am beside myself with joy.

My pledge is directed to making the mill-hands honour theirs and teaching them what value to attach to a pledge. For people in our country to take pledges whenever they fancy and break them at any moment betrays their degraded state. And for ten thousand mill-hands to break faith with themselves would spell ruin for the nation. It would never again be possible to raise the workers' issues. At every turn they would quote this as an example and say that ten thousand mill-hands endured suffering for twenty days with a man like Gandhi to lead them and still they did not win. I was thus forced to consider by what means the mill-hands could be made to remain firm. How could I do this without suffering myself? I saw that it was necessary to show them by example how, for the sake of one's pledge, one had to undergo suffering. So it was that I took this pledge. I am aware that it carries a taint. It is likely that, because of my vow, the mill-owners may be moved by consideration for me and come to grant the workers' [demand for] thirty-five per cent increase. My desire is that they should grant the demand only if they see its justice and not out of charity. But the natural result would be that they would do so out of charity and to that extent this pledge is one which cannot but fill me with shame. I weighed the two things, however, against each other: my sense of shame and the mill-hands' pledge. The balance tilted in favour of the latter and I resolved, for the sake of the mill-hands, to take no thought of my shame. In doing public work, a man must be prepared to put up even with such loss of face. Thus, my pledge is not at all by way of a threat to the mill-owners; on the contrary, I wish they clearly understand this and grant the 35 per cent to the mill-hands only if they think it just to do so. To the mill-hands, too, I would say that they should go to the owners and tell them as much.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

179. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO AMBALAL SARABHAI

SABARMATI
[*March 17, 1918*]

Be guided by your sense of justice rather than your desire to see that I break my fast. The latter gives me immense pleasure and, therefore, need not cause pain to anyone. The workers will profit more from what they get as a matter of justice—they will enjoy the benefit longer. Ordinary men prefer things to be plain. 35 per cent, 20 per cent, and arbitrator—we may go in for such *foolishness*, put up with it, to satisfy *our conscience or our pride*. The workers, being simple-minded, will look upon the thing as calculated deception. I should, therefore, prefer some other way, if we can find any. *If you want me to accept this, I will, but I won't have you decide the matter in haste.* Let the arbitrator meet us and come to a decision right now, and let us announce the wage fixed by him, that is, 35 per cent on the first day, 20 on the second and, on the third, what the arbitrator decides. There is foolishness even in this but things will be left in no doubt. The wage for the third day should be announced this very day.

[From Gujarati]
Ek Dharmayuddha

180. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS[1]

[*March 17, 1918*]

The mill-owners came and told me, "We shall give 35 per cent for your sake," but it would cut me to the quick if they did so. I knew they had been thinking that way, but I could not go back on my resolve, for I thought that ten thousand men debasing themselves would be like a curse from on high. It is

[1] Mahadev Desai reports these remarks as having been made during Gandhiji's talk with the mill-owners on the third evening after the commencement of his fast. The last sentence, however, makes it clear that the remarks were part of a speech.

extremely humiliating to me that they offer you 35 per cent for my sake.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

181. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SABARMATI,
Magh Krishna [Before *March 18, 1918*][1]

DEAR JAMNALALJI,

I have your letter. My visit to Nagpur has been postponed. At present the work here is taking every moment of my time. The workers' strike is going on and so is Government's tyranny over the peasants in Kheda. Both are mighty tasks.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2839

182. ADDRESS TO ASHRAM INMATES[2]

March 18, 1918

Most probably, we shall have a settlement today before ten. I am quite clear in my mind what it means and I see that it is something which should be quite unacceptable to me. It is my vow of fasting which is to blame. The vow is open to criticism from many points of view. This does not mean, of course, that it had very little in its favour and much against it; it means that, if there was much in its favour, there was much against it too. In so far as it affected the workers, there was much in its favour and the results have been correspondingly wholesome. In so far as it bore on the mill-owners, it was open to objection and, to that extent, I have had to give in. Deny it as emphatically as I may, the people cannot but feel that the mill-owners have acted under pressure of my fast and the world at large will not believe what I say. *My weak condition left the mill-owners no freedom. It is against*

[1] The Ahmedabad mill-workers' strike ended on this date.
[2] This was in the morning on the day of the settlement.

the principles of justice to get anything in writing from a person or make him agree to any condition or obtain anything whatever under duress. A satyagrahi will never do so. I have had, therefore, to give in on this matter. A man overpowered by a sense of shame, how much, after all, can he do? I put forward one modest demand after another and had to be content with what they accepted gracefully. If I had insisted on our demand in full, they would have met it. But I could not at all bring myself to secure anything from them by putting them in such a position. If I had done anything of the kind, I would have felt that I was breaking my fast by swallowing something most repulsive; how could I, who would not take even *amrit*[1] except at the proper hour, swallow such a thing?

I feel that some of the teachings of our sacred books are the result of profound experience. Thoreau has said that, where injustice prevails, an upright man simply cannot prosper and that, where justice prevails, such a one would experience no want. Our sacred books go even further and say that, where injustice prevails, an upright man just cannot live. That is why some amongst us withdraw from all activity. They do so not because they have grown weary of active life but simply because they find it impossible to take up any activity. They see so much of hypocrisy in the world that they cannot live in it. If an honest man finds himself surrounded on all sides by crooks, he should either turn his back on them or be as they are. In our world, some good men take to the Himalayas or the Vindhya mountains and mortify their bodies. Some think this body to be unreal; some, believing in the immortality and omnipresence of the soul, give up their bodies on the instant and attain *moksha*. Some do return but only after having so purified themselves that, thereafter, even while living in the midst of the world's hypocrisies, they can follow their own dictates. When I compare my state with that of these illuminated souls, I am such a mere pigmy that I don't know what to say. To be sure, it is not as if I did not know the measure of my strength. But in the outside world, it is esteemed much higher than it ought to be. Every day I discover so much of hypocrisy in the world that many times I feel I just cannot go on being here. At Phœnix, I often told you that, if one day you did not find me in your midst, you should not be surprised. If this feeling comes over me, I will go where you will never be able to seek me out.

[1] Mythological drink of the gods, supposed to confer immortality.

In that hour, do not feel bewildered, but go on with the tasks on hand as if I were with you all the time.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

183. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

[*March 18, 1918*][1]

The settlement which I place before you merely upholds the workers' pledge. There is nothing more in it. I pleaded with the mill-owners as well as I could. I asked them to grant a permanent increase of 35 per cent. They felt, however, that that would be too much. Let me say one thing. Our demand, too, was one-sided. Before the struggle commenced, we had tried to ascertain their point of view, but they did not respond to our request. The mill-owners now accept the principle of arbitration. I have agreed that the matter be entrusted to an arbitrator[2]. I shall succeed in getting 35 per cent from the arbitrator. If the arbitrator decides on something less, I will own that we had been wrong in making our demand. The mill-owners said that they had their pledge to abide by just as we had ours. I told them that they had no right to take any such pledge, but they insisted that theirs too was equally valid. I thought over the pledges of both. My fast stood in the way. I could not tell them : "I will break my fast only if you concede my demand." I felt that this would have been cowardice on my part. I, therefore, agreed that for the present both may maintain their pledges, and what the arbitrator decides should finally prevail. Our settlement, therefore, is briefly this :

On the first day, an increase of 35 per cent will be given in keeping with our pledge; on the second day, we get 20 per cent in keeping with the mill-owners'. From the third day till the date of the arbitrator's award, an increase of 27½ per cent will be paid and subsequently, if the arbitrator decides on 35 per cent, the mill-owners will give us 7½ per cent more and, if he decides on 20 per cent, we shall refund 7½ per cent.

[1] The settlement was arrived at on the morning of the 18th. According to *Ek Dharmayuddha*, Gandhiji announced it to the workers gathered in their thousands under the *babul* tree, evidently the same day. The meeting was attended by the Commissioner and prominent men of Ahmedabad.

[2] Prof. Anandshankar Dhruva, who was acceptable to both parties, was appointed.

What I have brought for you is enough to fulfil the letter o the pledge, but not its spirit. Spirit does not mean much to u and so we must rest content with the letter.

We have taken counsel together in this struggle; therefore do not take an oath hereafter without consulting us. He who ha no experience, and has attempted nothing big, has no right to tak an oath. After twenty years' experience, I have come to the con clusion that I am qualified to take a pledge. I see that you ar not yet so qualified. Do not, therefore, take an oath withou consulting your seniors. If the occasion demands one, come to us assured that we shall be prepared to die for you, as we now are But remember that we shall help you only in respect of a pledg you have taken with our concurrence. A pledge taken in erro can certainly be ignored. You have yet to learn how and whe to take a pledge.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

184. SPEECH TO AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS[2]

[*March 18, 1918*

It appears to me that as days pass, not only Ahmedabad bu the whole of India will be proud of this twenty-two days' struggl and India will see that we can hope much from a struggle conducte in this manner. There has been no bitterness in it. I hav never come across the like of it. I have had experience of man such conflicts or heard of them, but have not known any in whic there was so little ill-will or bitterness as in this. I hope yo will always maintain peace in the same way as you did durin the strike.

I must apologize to the employers. I have pained them ver much. My vow [to fast] was aimed at you, but everything i this world has two sides. Thus, the vow had an effect on th employers as well. I apologize to them humbly for this. I ar

[1] The rest of the speech is not available.

[2] On the evening of the day the settlement was arrived at, a meeting wa held in the compound of Ambalal Sarabhai's house. The mill-owners distribute sweets among the workers. Gandhiji addressed them after Ambalal Sarabhai ha spoken briefly welcoming the settlement. The text is incomplete.

as much their servant as the workers'. All I ask is that both should utilize my services to the full.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

185. TELEGRAM TO ANNIE BESANT

[*March 18, 1918*][1]

THANK GOD, ALL OVER. HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT ARRIVED AT. DIFFICULT WORK OF CONSTRUCTION NOW BEGINS. ALL OF US APPRECIATE YOUR KINDLY FEELING.

GANDHI

New India, 19-3-1918

186. AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS' STRIKE

March 19, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 17

VICTORY FOR BOTH

We have said in earlier leaflets that in satyagraha both the parties invariably succeed. He who fought for truth and attained his object would of course have won. But even he who first opposed the truth and subsequently recognized it as such and conceded it should also be considered to have won. From this point of view, because the workers' pledge has been fulfilled, both the parties have won. The employers had taken an oath that they would not give more than 20 per cent. We have respected their oath, too. Thus the honour of both has been upheld. Let us now see what the settlement is :

1. Workers are to resume work tomorrow, i.e., on the 20th; for that day they will get a 35 per cent increase; and for the 21st, a 20 per cent increase.

2. From the 22nd, they will get an increase not exceeding 35 per cent, as the arbitrator may decide.

[1] Gandhiji probably sent the wire on the day of the settlement. Annie Besant published it with the comment: "It is impossible to tell the relief brought by this message. We can only say with him: 'Thank God'. "

3. Prof. Anandshankar Bapubhai Dhruva, M.A., LL.B., prominent man of letters of Gujarat and a man of saintly characte a professor in Gujarat College and its Vice-Principal, will be th arbitrator.

4. The arbitrator should give his award within three month During the period, workers will be paid an increase of 27½ pe cent, i.e., the workers give up half of their demand and the en ployers half of theirs.

5. Whatever amount is decided by the arbitrator will b adjusted against the 27½ per cent, i.e., if the arbitrator awards mo than 27½ per cent, the employers will give that increase and, if h awards less than 27½ per cent, the workers will refund the exces

Two things have been accomplished by this settlement. Firs the honour of the workers has been upheld; secondly, it has bee accepted as a principle that any serious dispute between the tw parties should be settled not by resort to a strike but by arbitratio It is not one of the terms of the settlement that in future the parti will settle their differences by arbitration; but, as the settleme has come about through arbitration, it is presumed that on a simil occasion in future also an arbitrator will be appointed. It shou not be understood from this that an arbitrator will be appointe even for trifling differences. It will be humiliating to both parti if a third party has to intervene every time there is a differen between the employers and the workers. Employers cann tolerate that. They will not do their business under such co ditions. The world has always respected wealth and it will alwa demand respect. Consequently, if workers harass the employe for trifles, the relations that now obtain between them will brea We believe workers will not do anything of the kind. We mu also advise them that they should never resort to a strike i thoughtless haste. We can give them no help if they go on stri without consulting us. Doubt has been raised whether we a right in claiming that our pledge has been fulfilled, since we ha secured an increase of 35 per cent for one day only. This seem very much like pacifying children. This has certainly happene on some occasions but not in this case. We have accepted 35 p cent for one day deliberately as the best thing to do in the ci cumstances. "We will not resume work without securing a 3 per cent increase" may mean one of two things; one, that we w not accept anything less than a 35 per cent increase at any tim and, two, that we will resume work with a 35 per cent increas it being enough even if we get it just for a day. Those wh may have decided that it is just to demand a permanent increa

of 35 per cent and feel sure that they have strength in plenty to fight till they get it will consider their pledge fulfilled only when they get what they want. But that was not what we had resolved. We were always ready to accept an arbitrator's decision. The figure of 35 per cent was fixed unilaterally. Before we advised workers to demand 35 per cent, we wanted to hear from the employers themselves their view of the matter. Unfortunately, we did not succeed. So we examined their side as best we could and advised a demand for 35 per cent. But we cannot claim that the figure of 35 per cent was not open to question. We have never said so. If the employers prove that we are mistaken, we may certainly advise workers to accept less. Hence, if the arbitrator decides in favour of a smaller increase and we abide by his decison, our pledge will not have been violated. We always accepted the principle of arbitration. We think we were not wrong in deciding upon a 35 per cent increase; we hope, therefore, that this increase will be granted. If, however, we discover that the figure was wrong, we should willingly accept less.

We ourselves have asked for three months' time. Employers were willing to accept a fortnight's time-limit. We have, however, to make some inquiries in Bombay to prove the justice of our demand. It is also very necessary to show to the arbitrator the conditions prevailing here and to acquaint him fully with the living conditions of workers. Without such information, he cannot have a complete idea. Such detailed work cannot be completed in a few days. We shall see, however, that the work is completed as speedily as possible.

Some workers wanted to be paid for the period of the lock-out. We must say that we are not entitled to ask for this. Since we did not accept the 20 per cent increase, either a strike or a lock-out became necessary. In suffering for 22 days, we did what was merely our duty and was in our own interest. We have had our reward for that suffering, namely, this settlement. How can we now ask for wages for the period of the lock-out? Such demand [if accepted] would amount to our having fought the struggle with the employers' money. The workers should be ashamed to entertain such an idea. A warrior must fight on his own strength. Again, the employers had paid all wages due to the workmen before the lock-out, so that it can be said that workers now begin a new term of employment. They should consider all these points and give up the idea of asking for wages for the period of the lock-out.

The wages will be due only after twenty days. What will t the workers' condition in the meantime? Many may not hav a pie left with them. Those who are in need of assistance befor the date of payment should politely request their employers for and we are sure they will make some provision.

The workers should note that their condition hereafter wi depend on the quality of their work. If they work sincerel obediently and with energy, they will win the employers' goodwi and be helped by them in a great many ways. It would be mistake to believe that anything could be secured only throug us. We are prepared to serve labour in their time of difficulty but their interests will be best served if they look upon the em ployers as their parents and approach them for all that they want.

The need now is for peace. Small inconveniences should b tolerated.

If you permit us, we should like to help some of you to over come your bad habits. We want to provide facilities for your anc your children's education. We want to see all-round improve ment in you, in your morals, in your and your children's health and in your economic condition. If you permit us, we will worl amongst you towards this end.

The greatest victory for the workers lies in this—God has kep their honour inviolate. He whose honour is preserved has securec all else. Even imperial rule over the world is as dust, if gainec at the sacrifice of one's honour.

[From Gujarati]

Ek Dharmayuddha

187. LETTER TO A PUBLIC WORKER

March 19, 1918

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. If indeed you have not got justice at my hands, why don't you give me up? What I told you was only in the nature of advice. I told you that you might follow my advice only if you agreed. If you decided to give up public work, that was because you approved of my advice. If now you find that there is nothing but harshness in it, you can certainly set it aside. I would advise you now to go on with your work as before. I don't say this in anger but because I think it right. You are in-capable of remembering what you might have said earlier. I feel,

therefore, that for the present you should follow your own independent way. Only so will you prosper. You will sink low if you treat even my advice as an order and believe that you must not depart from it ever so little. The best course for you, it seems to me, is to be engrossed in your Home Rule work, and I hope that is the course you will adopt. Rest assured I shall not be angry with you for being occupied with conferences, etc. You may also approach me for advice when you know the difference between my advice and my order. I write this letter entirely for your peace of mind, not to make you unhappy.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

188. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD MEETING[1]

March 21, 1918

I have had occasion before now to introduce Mr. Andrews to you. He can best be described as a *rishi* for he has all the qualities of a holy sage. He has recently returned from Fiji, where he went on a mission that concerns us. While in Fiji, he did not put up in any hotel or with any well-to-do person; he lived among the labourers, in their own houses, and studied their manner of living. We have, at present, the Kheda affair on hand. I am now in a position to tell you on the basis of my own investigation that, in some of the talukas of that district, the crop has been less than four annas. On the other hand, I am in a great hurry to leave for Delhi, the occasion being quite urgent. I should not, however, like the work in Kheda district to be delayed and I am sure you will be glad to hear that Mr. Andrews has taken it up as his own for the time being. He is leaving today for Bombay to see His Excellency the Governor. He will, on my behalf, place certain facts before him and also convey my request. If anything comes of this, all right; otherwise he will be in Nadiad on Sunday next. Thus, he has started working for our cause as well.[2]

[1] Gandhiji made these preliminary remarks as Chairman. The meeting was addressed by C. F. Andrews on the condition of Indian indentured labourers in Fiji, where he had spent over four months in 1917, and worked for the Indian community's betterment.

[2] What follow are Gandhiji's observations after Andrews had spoken.

I was happy to hear Mr. Andrews speak in Hindi. I wa not responsible for that, however. He speaks very well in Englis also; what need one say of a Cambridge don's English? If he wer addressing a meeting of students on Milton or Shakespeare, it woul be quite right for him to speak in English. The first tim Mr. Andrews went to Fiji,[1] he was accompanied by Mr. Pearso and on the second occasion he went alone. It was I who advise him to go there to observe things, lest a system as harmful a indenture came to replace it. The hospitals Mr. Andrew mentioned are in fact no hospitals but engines of oppression, a one might say, for the plight of Indian women in these hospital is miserable indeed. When Mr. Andrews asked the Government t open hospitals for women in that country, it replied that it wa for the planters to do so and the latter, on their part, said tha the Government would attend to the matter when the system o indenture had ended. In schools, children receive instructio in the Christian faith from the very start. This is not good fo Hindu and Muslim children. Moreover, the education is throug the medium of English and, therefore, our people gain little fro it. The same thing obtains in Natal. Indian teachers are no available there, nor in Fiji. We can be of help in this matter If a few men who will be satisfied with a small income go ove to these places as teachers, that will be of some help. One may also help by giving anything from a pie to a hundred thousand rupees. The expenses on the Australian lady who has volunteered to go to Fiji will, for the time being, be borne by Mr. Andrews. He will get some assistance from the Imperial Citizenship Association, but further help will be needed. I don't know how to estimate the value of all these services of Mr. Andrews. He is a man of retiring disposition and service of others is his one mission in life. I have deliberately called him a *rishi*. A great man like him, given to serving others, we cannot thank enough.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 24-3-1918

[1] This was in 1915.

189. LETTER TO COMMISSIONER, NORTHERN DIVISION

[Before *March 22, 1918*]

Before publishing the pledges of satyagraha and before I hold public meetings, I would like to make one last request. Please announce that the collections of the second instalment of the land assessment will be postponed, insisting at the same time on all those who hold land on special tenures to pay up their full land revenue dues. This would have a pacifying effect and, to my mind, in the present circumstances, be accepted as a merciful relief.[1]

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

190. SPEECH AT NADIAD[2]

March 22, 1918

The occasion which has brought us here is so important that it will be enshrined in your memory for ever. For some months past, an agitation has been going on in this district for securing the suspension of land revenue. The crops have been generally less than four annas this year and so the collection of revenue ought to be suspended.

In compliance with the Resolution of the Gujarat Sabha, I toured a number of villages and inquired personally into the matter. My co-workers did the same. The available evidence goes to show that the crops do not exceed four annas in the district as a whole. The Government, too, claims to have made an inquiry, but it is not prepared to give the needed relief to the farmers. It has decided to collect the dues. If people do not pay, it has threatened to adopt coercive measures. Notices have been issued for the

[1] Following the Bombay Governor's reply of March 17 to his letter, *vide* p. 259, this was Gandhiji's final effort at settlement by negotiation. The commissioner, however, rejected his request, observing that whatever relief was considered justifiable had already been extended, and he was instructing the Collector to recover the unpaid assessment.

[2] Gandhiji addressed a meeting of about 5,000 people in connection with the situation in Kheda. The meeting marked the inauguration of Kheda satyagraha. This report of Gandhiji's speech has been collated with the one available in Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1918.

collection of *chothai*[1] and for the confiscation of holdings. Complaints of oppression by *Talatis* are also being received. I have only this to say to the *Talatis* and chiefs of villages who are present at this meeting: "Let them by all means be loyal to the Government but that loyalty does not lie in oppressing [the people]." The land revenue must be realized, as ordered, but the Government certainly would not ask them to beat the people. Surely, the law can never authorize such an order. If there should be any such order, the *Talatis* are not bound to obey it. Anyone acting in this manner will be committing treason against the country, the State and God. They may execute the orders of superiors loyally, but they have no right to molest the people.

If they are convinced that the crop is below four annas they should say so boldly to their superior officers. There are two reasons why I give you this advice. It has been the system of Government to assert that what they have said is true. In a talk with Lord Willingdon I came to know his opinion that the people of India do not give out their correct views; they are not bold enough to say what they mean; they say anything which pleases the other party; they are lacking in moral courage.[2]

What are the people to do in this situation? Those whose crops are less than four annas should tell the Government politely : "It is not possible for us to submit to this injustice; when the crops have, in fact, failed, we cannot pay up our dues and thereby prove ourselves liars. You may realize the dues by force if you choose." It is to give you this advice that this meeting has been called.

This is a very beautiful district. Its people are well off. It has delightful trees, the like of which I have seen nowhere else in this country except in Bihar.

But Bihar has natural beauty, while in this district beauty has been achieved by hard work and perseverance. This is the only district which can boast of intelligent and industrious agriculturists. They have turned their land into a lovely orchard. They can be justly proud of their achievement. It does not, however, follow that they may be called upon to pay land revenue even when their crops have failed. This industrious section of the district's population is steadily growing poorer and many have been compelled to give up agriculture and take to daily labour. This is a distressing thing

[1] One-fourth of the assessment exacted as fine for non-payment of revenue

[2] This additional paragraph is found in Bombay Secret Abstracts.

for anyone to have to do. A country in which the farmers find this necessary is in for a bad time.

In fact revenue should be paid from the sale value of the crops; it is intolerable, when the crops have failed, that the Government should recover it forcibly. But, in this country, it has become a practice with the Government to insist that it is always in the right. It is intolerable that, however just the people's case, the Government should have its own way. Justice must prevail and injustice yield. The agriculturists claim, and the evidence collected by those who conducted the inquiry bears them out, that the crops have failed and yet the Government insists that they have been plentiful. In the circumstances, the people have every right to tell the Government that, surely, they could see and judge things as well as the Government, and that they would not submit to injustice done by the officers. That people would tell lies, for the sake of saving at the most a year's interest by asking for a postponement of the assessment, is inconceivable. That the officers should suggest anything of the kind is intolerable. We must show, therefore, that our case is just; placed in the situation that we are, I would tell you that, if the Government does not accept our request, we should declare plainly that we shall not pay land revenue and will be prepared to take the consequences.

All nations which have risen have done so through suffering. If the people have to sacrifice their land, they should be ready to do so and suffer. Some will even argue that this is treason or rebellion; it is nothing of the kind. It means suffering ourselves, no treason. When the crops have failed, to pay up the dues out of fear is cowardice. We are human beings, not animals. To refuse a thing firmly and plainly in the name of truth—that is satyagraha.

We have assembled today to do the spade-work for satyagraha. We don't propose to pay up the revenue to the Government; we want to fight it out. We have to prepare ourselves, then, for the suffering that may follow. We must visualize what we shall have to face :

(1) The Government may recover the assessment by selling our cattle and our movable property.
(2) It may impose fines.
(3) It may confiscate jagirs.
(4) It may even put people in jail on the ground that they are defiant[1].

[1] The Gujarati original has *dandai*.

The word has been used by the Government and I don't like it. How can they say that you are defiant merely because you speak the truth? Indeed, such a person is brave, not defiant. It is an act of bravery, and no defiance, for a man who, though he can afford to pay, refuses to do so in the interests of the poor. If in the process this man has to leave the village for ever, he will do so; he alone may take the pledge today who is ready for this.

It is very difficult to take the pledge of satyagraha; it is still more difficult to carry out one. I cannot bear to think of any one breaking a pledge once taken, forsaking his God. It would cause me very great pain, indeed, if you took a pledge which you did not mean to keep. In the intensity of my suffering, I may take an extreme step. I may have to fast. I don't suffer when I fast; fasting hurts me less than that people should deceive me by breaking their pledge. In satyagraha, a pledge is the most valuable thing of all; it must be kept up to the very end. A pledge taken in God's name must never be broken. I would not hesitate to sacrifice my life if that might ensure that thousands would keep their pledge. Those who want to fight must make up their minds once for all. I would not mind very much if people just said that they would hold out as long as possible but that they were not sure of themselves in case of severe repression. I would far rather that they cut my throat than that they break my heart by betraying their pledge. The man who cuts my throat, I would pray to God to forgive, but I would not forgive the other man.

I would tell you, therefore, in all humility, whatever you decide, do so with full thought and consideration. Only those who are determined to carry their decision through are able to raise themselves. When you have so raised yourselves, the Government will respect you, for it will know then, that it was dealing with men who would honour their plighted word and not betray it. A man who breaks his word can do no service to his country, or to his Government or to God.

I want, therefore, to know whether you agree; I ask you : "Are you ready to fight?" I shall prepare a written pledge. Those friends who wish to take it should come to the Ashram and give their signatures. I have only one request: "Suffer everything and honour the pledge; refuse to pay the revenue and prove to the Government thereby that you are prepared for sacrifices." The Government cannot use force against everyone.[1]

[1] What follows is as reported in Bombay Secret Abstracts.

I advise those who have *sanadia* lands to pay the assessment. Mr. Andrews, who has gone to interview the Governor, sends me a wire to go to Delhi to see him. Mr. Andrews and Mr. Vallabhbhai (Patel) will carry on further work here. I am going to Delhi in connection with the work of Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

191. THE PLEDGE[1]

[NADIAD,
March 22, 1918]

Our village has had crops under four annas. We therefore requested the Government to postpone collection to the next year, but they did not do so. We the undersigned therefore solemnly declare that we shall not pay the assessment for the year whether it be wholly or in part; we shall leave it to the Government to take any legal steps they choose to enforce recovery of the same and we shall undergo all the sufferings that this may involve. We shall also allow our lands to be confiscated should they do so. But we shall not by voluntary payment allow ourselves to be regarded as liars and thus lose our self-respect. If the Government would graciously postpone for all the remaining villages collection of the balance of the revenue, we, who can afford it, would be prepared to pay up revenue, whether it be in full or in part. The reason why the well-to-do amongst us would not pay is that, if they do, the needy ones would, out of fright, sell their chattels or incur debts and pay the revenue and thus suffer. We believe that it is the duty of the well-to-do to protect the needy against such a plight.

Young India, 12-6-1918

[1] Some 200 people signed this pledge after Gandhiji had finished his speech at the Nadiad meeting; *vide* the preceding item. During the days that followed, more people took the pledge.

192. *LETTER TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY*

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE
DELHI
March 25, 191

TO
THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO
HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY

I can't describe to you how much disturbed I have been ove this affair of Ali brothers, but our talk of this morning has giver me much comfort and relief. It was a pleasure to see that yoı had grasped my point in a moment. It would be a wonderful ac on the part of the Government if, without the knowledge of any- body, an order was sent for their discharge. Such a manner o discharging them would avoid all delirious demonstration tha would otherwise inevitably take place to receive them.

These are some of the reasons for their discharge :

(a) If they are kept interned in order that they may not dc anything hostile to the Government, the idea is frustratec because they do correspond with, and otherwise senc messages to, whomsoever they choose.

(b) Their detention only increases their influence day after day.

(c) Their detention embitters the feelings of their friends and deepens the discontent of Mahomedans in general, which the Hindus too share to a certain extent.

(d) Moulana Abdul Bari Saheb is a man wielding tremendous power over thousands of Mussalmans. He is their spiritual adviser and the Government would make him theirs by releasing the brothers.

(e) The brothers are, so far as I am aware, men with a strong will, of noble birth, men of culture and learning, possessing great influence over the educated Mahomedans, open-minded and straightforward. It was a great mistake to have interned them. Surely the Government have ever need of such men on their side. Lastly in my humble opinion nothing can possibly be gained by keeping them under detention,

It will be worthy of a great Government to discharge them whilst all the clamour and agitation for their release are under suspense.

If my presence is wanted I shall be at His Excellency's *service any moment*[1] I am required.

Please favour me with a reply. Between the 29th and 31st I shall be in Indore presiding over the deliberations of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Thereafter at Ahmedabad.

N.A.I.: Home, Political (a): June 1918, Nos. 359-60

193. CIRCULAR REGARDING KHEDA SITUATION[2]

HINDU ANATH ASHRAM,
NADIAD,
Phagun Sud 15, March, 27, 1918

THE DUTY OF THE RYOTS OF KAIRA DISTRICT

As the crops in the Kaira District have been poor, that is to say, below 4 annas in most of the villages, the Government rule is that the collection of Land Revenue this year should be postponed. Repeated appeals have been made to Government on behalf of the ryots to make this postponement. On behalf of the people the Gujarat Sabha, the honourable Messrs G. K. Parekh and V. J. Patel and Messrs Deodhar, Amritlal Thakkar and Joshi of the Servants of India Society made inquiries about the crops and all came to the conclusion that the *kharif* crop practically came to nothing. With the help of many responsible and respectable assistants, I also made minute inquiries into the crops of about 400 villages and found the same thing that, in almost all the villages the anna valuation was below four annas. I also saw that many of the ryots had no money, and that the granaries of many were empty; further that many poor people were importing maize whole-sale from outside in place of grain grown in this

[1] In the source this is in capitals.

[2] The circular, originally in Gujarati, was reproduced in *Gujarati*, 31-3-1918. According to the District Magistrate of Kheda, whose note is available in Bombay Secret Abstracts, Gandhiji was busy issuing circulars since his return to Nadiad from Delhi on March 27. The first one which was reported to have been posted all over the district, and which is not available, asked farmers to communicate to Gandhiji details of coercive official measures. This was another circular issued by Gandhiji.

district and living on that. I even saw this, that wherever the people have paid up the Land Revenue they had done so through fear of the *Talati*, etc. At several places people have paid the land revenue by selling their trees, etc. It also came to my notice that the people were groaning under the burden of extremely high prices. Further the people, through fear of plague, are living in huts in a state of anxiety.[1] All these facts have been explained to the Collector and the Commissioner; they have made certain concessions but these are of no account in comparison with the necessities of the people. In such circumstances, only one piece of advice can be given to the people, and it is this that in order to prove their truthfulness, they should not pay the land revenue but let Government collect the land revenue by selling their property if it so desires. It is more advisable to lose all by not paying the land revenue than to pay it up through fear and so prove false. At any rate, this is my definite advice to the people, they should certainly not pay the land revenue and they should bear all the suffering and oppression (*zulum*) that may result. Government is bound to respect popular opinion, and it is only if people act in this way that Government will learn to respect it. Many leading gentlemen are ready to assist the people in this struggle, and even if anyone is turned out of house and home, arrangements have been made for his food and lodging. Forms of pledge for the signatures of those who have courage enough not to pay the assessment have already been issued, and it is hoped that all agriculturists who have not paid will sign it. My advice is to think well before signing, but it should be remembered that after signing whatever may happen there can be no going back.

M. K. GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts: 1918

[1] This sentence is not found in the report in *Gujarati*.

194. LETTER TO THE PRESS[1]

NADIAD,
March 27, 1918

TO
THE EDITOR
THE LEADER
ALLAHABAD

SIR,

Perhaps I owe an explanation to the public with regard to my recent fast. Some friends consider the action to have been silly, others cowardly and some others still worse. In my opinion, I would have been untrue to my Maker and to the cause I was espousing, if I had acted otherwise.

When over a month ago I reached Bombay, I was told that Ahmedabad mill-hands had threatened a strike and violence if the bonus that was given to them during the plague was withdrawn. I was asked to intervene and I consented. Owing to the plague the men were getting as much as 70 per cent bonus since August last. An attempt to recall that bonus had resulted in grave dissatisfaction among the labourers. When it was almost too late, the mill-owners offered in the place of the plague bonus and for the sake of the high prices a rise of 20 per cent. The labourers were unsatisfied. The matter was referred to arbitration, Mr. Chatfield, the Collector, being the umpire. The men in some mills however struck work. The owners, thinking that they had done so without just cause, withdrew from the arbitration and declared a general lock-out to be continued till the labourers were exhausted into accepting 20 per cent increase they had offered. Messrs Shankarlal Banker, V. J. Patel and I, the arbitrators appointed on behalf of the labourers thought that they were to be demoralized if we did not act promptly and decisively. We, therefore, investigated the question of increase. We sought the mill-owners' assistance. They would not give it. Their one purpose was to organize themselves into a combination that could fight a similar combination of their employees. One-sided technically though our investigation was, we endeavoured to examine the mill-owners'

[1] Evidently this was issued generally to the Press, and was also published in *The Hindu*.

side and came to the conclusion that a 35 per cent increase wa fair. Before announcing the figure to the mill-hands, we informe the employers of the result of our inquiry and told them that w would correct ourselves if they could show any error. The latt would not co-operate. They sent a reply saying as much, bu they pointed out in it that the rate of increase granted by th Government as also the employers in Bombay was much less tha the one contemplated by us. I felt that the addendum was be side the point and at a huge meeting[1] announced 35 per cent fo the mill-hands' acceptance. Be it noted that the plague bonu amounted to 70 per cent of their wages and they had declare their intention of accepting not less than 50 per cent as hig prices increase. They were now called upon to accept the mea (the fixing of the mean was quite an accident) between the mil owners 20 per cent, and their own 50 per cent. After som grumbling, the meeting accepted the 35 per cent increase, it alwa being understood that they would recognize, at the same tim the principle of arbitration whenever the mill-owners did so. Fro that time forward, i.e., 26th February last, day after day thousan of people gathered together under the shade of a tree outside th city walls, people walking long distances in many cases, and solemn ly repeated their determination in the name of God not to accep anything less than 35 per cent. No pecuniary assistance was give to them. It is easy enough to understand that many must suffe from the pangs of starvation and that they could not, while the were without employment, get any credit. We who were helpin them came, on the other hand, to the conclusion that we woul only spoil them if we collected public funds and utilized them fo feeding them unless the able-bodied amongst them were ready t perform bread labour. It was a difficult task to persuade me who had worked at machines, to shoulder baskets of sand o bricks. They came but they did so grudgingly. The mill-owne hardened their hearts. They were equally determined not to g beyond 20 per cent and they appointed emissaries to persuade th men to give in. Even during the early part of the lock-out, whil we had declined to help those who would not work, we had assure them that we would feed and clothe ourselves after feeding an clothing them. Twenty-two days had passed by. Hunger and th mill-owners' emissaries were producing their effect and Satan wa whispering to the men that there was no such thing as Go on earth who would help them and that vows were dodges resorte

[1] *Vide* "Speech to Ahmedabad Mill-hands", February 26, 1918.

to by weaklings. One morning instead of an eager and enthusiastic crowd of 5 to 10 thousand men with determination written on their faces, I met a body of about 2000 men with despair written on their faces. We had just heard that mill-hands living in a particular chawl had declined to attend the meeting, were preparing to go to work and accept 20 per cent increase and were taunting us (I think very properly) that it was very well for us who had motors at our disposal and plenty of food, to attend their meetings and advise staunchness even unto death. What was I to do? I held the cause to be just. I believe in God as I believe that I am writing this letter. I believe in the necessity of the performance of one's promises at all costs. I knew that the men before us were godfearing men, but that the long-drawn-out lock-out or strike was putting an undue strain upon them. I had the knowledge before me that during my extensive travels in India, hundreds of people were found who as readily broke their promises as they made them. I knew, too, that the best of us have but a vague and indistinct belief in soul-force and in God. I felt that it was a sacred moment for me, my faith was on the anvil, and I had no hesitation to rising and declaring to the men that a breach of their vow so solemnly taken was unendurable by me and that I would not take any food until they had the 35 per cent increase given or until they had fallen. A meeting that was up to now unlike the former meetings, totally unresponsive, woke up as if by magic. Tears trickled down the cheeks of every one of them and men after men rose up saying that they would never go to the mills unless they got the increase and that they would go about the city and steel the hearts of those who had not attended the meeting. It was a privilege to witness the demonstration of the efficacy of truth and love. Every one immediately realized that the protecting power of God was as much with us today as it used to be in the days of yore. I am not sorry for the vow but with the belief that I have, I would have been unworthy of the trust undertaken by me, if I had done anything less. Before I took the vow I knew that there were serious defects about it. For me to take such a vow in order to affect in any shape or form the decision of the mill-owners would be a cowardly injustice done to them and that I would prove myself unfit for the friendship which I had the privilege of enjoying with some of them. I knew that I ran the risk of being misunderstood. I could not prevent my fast from affecting their decision. Their knowledge, moreover, put a responsibility on me which I was ill able to bear. From now I disabled myself from gaining concessions for the men which ordi-

narily, in a struggle such as this, I would be entirely justified i securing. I knew, too, that I would have to be satisfied with th minimum I could get from the mill-owners and with a fulfilmer of the letter of the men's vow rather than its spirit and so hat it happened. I put the effect of my vow in one scale and the meri of it in the other. There are hardly any acts of human beings whic are free from all taint. Mine, I know, was exceptionally tainte but I preferred the ignominy of having unworthily compromise by my vow the position and independence of the mill-owners rathe than that it should be said by posterity that 10,000 men had sudder ly broken a vow which they had for over twenty days solemnl taken and repeated in the name of God. I am fully convinced th no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perforr great tasks unless they become as true as steel and unless the promises come to be regarded by the world like the law of th Medes and Persians, inflexible and unbreakable, and whateve may be the verdict of friends, so far as I can think at presen on given occasions I should not hesitate in future to repeat th humble performance which I have taken the liberty of describin in this communication.

I cannot conclude this letter without mentioning two names c whom India has every reason to be proud. The mill-owners wer represented by Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai who is a gentleman in ever sense of the term. He is a man of great culture and equally grea abilities. He adds to these qualities a resolute will. The mill hands were represented by his sister Anasuyabehn. She possesse a heart of gold. She is full of pity for the poor. The mill-hand adore her. Her word is law with them. I have not known struggle fought with so little bitterness and such courtesy on eithe side. This happy result is principally due to the connections wit it of Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai and Anasuyabehn.

I am,
Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDH

The Leader, 3-4-1918

195. LETTER TO J. B. KRIPALANI[1]

NADIAD,
March 27, 1918

MY DEAR FRIEND[2],

You will forgive me for not writing to you earlier. I hope Girdhari gave you my message. I wanted to give you a letter that would bring you peace and joy. And I waited. I may fail to give you such a letter even now. But I can no longer keep back writing to you. Your own letter pouring forth the soul's agony stares me in the face. But should death, even when it overtakes our dearest so suddenly, as it has done in your brother's case, paralyse us? Is it not only "a change and a forgetting"? Is it any the less so when it comes all of a sudden? You have been called to a privileged position. Your faith and your philosophy are on their trial. If you feed by honest means two hungry mouths of your family, you are performing a truly national service. What will happen to India if all the bread-winners turned so-called servants of India? You will only now be weighed in the balance and I know you will not be found wanting. All your friends also are now on their trial. Pray let me know of your plans. If you can, do come to see me, and we shall discuss them. Any assistance I can render is, you know, yours.

With deep love and sympathy,

Yours ever,
BAPUJI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This was in reply to Kripalani's letter conveying news about the deaths of his brother and sister-in-law and expressing the fear that he might have to give up social service.

[2] Jivatram B. Kripalani (b. 1886); educationist, politician and President, Indian National Congress, 1946

196. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS ON KHEDA SITUATION

NADIAD,
March 28, 1918

In the district of Kheda, the crops for the year 1917-18 have, by common admission, proved a partial failure. Under the Revenue rules if the crops are under four annas, the cultivators are entitled to full suspension of the Revenue assessment for the year; if the crops are under six annas, half the amount of assessment is suspended. So far as I am aware, the Government have been pleased to grant full suspension with regard to one village out of nearly 600, and half-suspension in the case of over 103 villages. It is claimed on behalf of the ryots that the suspension is not at all adequate to the actuality. The Government contend that in the vast majority of villages, crops have been over six annas. The only question therefore at issue is, whether the crops have been under four annas or six annas, as the case may be, or over the latter figure. Government valuation is in the first instance made by the *Talatis* assisted by the chief men of the villages concerned. As a rule, no check on their figures is considered necessary, for it is only during partial failure of crops that Government valuation of crops may have to be challenged. The *Talatis* are as a class obsequious, unscrupulous and tyrannical. The chief men are especially selected for their docility. The *Talatis'* one aim is naturally to collect full assessment as promptly as possible. We sometimes read accounts of assiduous *Talatis* having been awarded *pugree* for making full collection. In applying to the *Talatis* the adjectives I have given, I wish to cast no reflections on them as men. I merely state the fact. The *Talatis* are not born; they are made; and rent-collectors all the world over have to cultivate a callousness without which they could not do their work to the satisfaction of their masters. It is impossible for me to reproduce the graphic description given by the ryots of the rent collectors which the *Talatis* chiefly are. My purpose in dealing with the *Talatis* is to show that the Government's valuation of the crops is derived in the first instance from the tainted source and is presumably biased against the ryots. As against their valuation, we have the universal testimony of ryots, high and low, some of whom are men of position and considerable wealth, who have a reputation to lose and who have nothing to gain by exaggeration except the odium

of *Talatis* and possibly higher officials. I wish to state at once that behind this movement there is no desire to discredit Government, or an individual official. The movement is intended to assert the right of the people to be effectively heard in matters concerning themselves.

It is known to the public that the Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Parekh and Mr. V. J. Patel, invited and assisted by the Gujarat Sabha, carried on investigations as also Messrs Deodhar, Joshi and Thakkar of the Servants of India Society. Their investigation was necessarily preliminary and brief and therefore confined to a few villages only. But the result of their inquiry went to show that the crops in the majority of cases were under four annas. As their investigation, not being extensive enough, was capable of being challenged, and it was challenged, I undertook a full inquiry with the assistance of over 20 capable, experienced and impartial men of influence and status. I personally visited over 50 villages and met as many men in the villages as I could, inspected in these villages most of the fields belonging to them and after a searching cross-examination of the villagers, came to the conclusion that their crops were under four annas. I found that among the men who surrounded me, there were present those who were ready to check exaggerations and wild statements. Men knew what was at stake if they departed from the truth. As to the *rabi* crops and the still standing *kharif* crops, I was able by the evidence of my own eyes to check the statements of the agriculturists. The methods adopted by my co-workers were exactly the same. In this manner nearly 400 villagers were examined and with but a few exceptions, crops were found to be under four annas, and only in three cases they were found to be over six annas. The method adopted by us was, so far as the *kharif* crops were concerned, to ascertain the actual yield of the whole of the crops of individual villages and the possible yield of the same village in a normal year. Assuming the truth of the statements made by them, this is admittedly an absolute test, and any other method that would bring about the same result must be rejected as untrue and unscientific; and as I have already remarked, all probability of exaggeration was avoided in the above-named investigation. As to the standing *rabi* crops, there was the eye estimate and it was tested by the method above mentioned. The Government method is an eye estimate and therefore a matter largely of guess-work. It is moreover open to fundamental objections which I have endeavoured to set forth in a letter to the Collector of the District. I requested him to treat Vadthal—a well-known and ordinarily well-to-do village of the district with the railway

line passing by it and which is near a trade centre—as a test case and I suggested that if the crops were in that village proved to be under four annas, as I hold they were, it might be assumed that in the other villages less fortunately situated, crops were not likely to be more than four annas. I have added to my request a suggestion that I should be permitted to be present at the inquiry. He made the inquiry but rejected my suggestion and therefore it proved to be one-sided. The Collector has made an elaborate report on the crops of that village which, in my opinion, I have successfully challenged. The original Government valuation, I understand was twelve annas, the Collector's minimum valuation is seven annas. If the probably wrong methods of valuation to which I have drawn attention and which have been adopted by the Collector are allowed for, the valuation according to his own reckoning would come under six annas and according to the agriculturists it would be under four annas. Both the report and my answer are too technical to be of value to the public. But I have suggested that, as both the Government and agriculturists hold themselves in the right, if the Government have any regard for popular opinion, they should appoint an impartial committee of inquiry with the cultivators' representatives upon it, or gracefully accept the popular view. The Government have rejected both the suggestions and insist upon applying coercive measures for the collection of revenue. It may be mentioned that these measures have never been totally suspended and in many cases the ryots have paid simply under pressure. The *Talatis* have taken away cattle and have returned them only after the payment of assessment. In one case, I witnessed a painful incident. A man having his milch buffalo taken away from him and it was only on my happening to go to the village that the buffalo was released; this buffalo was the most valuable property the man possessed and source of daily bread for him. Scores of such cases have already happened and many more will no doubt happen hereafter if the public opinion is not ranged on the side of the people. Every means of seeking redress by prayers has been exhausted. Interviews with the Collector, the Commissioner and His Excellency have taken place. The final suggestion that was made is this: Although in the majority of cases, people are entitled to full suspension, half suspension should be granted throughout the district except for the villages which show, by common consent, crops over six annas. Such a gracious concession may be accompanied by a declaration that the Government would expect those who have ready means voluntarily to pay up the dues, we the workers on our

part undertaking to persuade such people to pay up the Government dues. This will leave only the poorest people untouched. I venture to submit that acceptance of this suggestion can only bring credit and strength to the Government. Resistance of popular will can only produce discontent which, in the case of fear-stricken peasantry such as of Kaira, can only find an underground passage and thus demoralize them. The present movement is an attempt to get out of such a false position, humiliating alike for the Government and the people. And how do the Government propose to assert their position and so-called prestige? They have a Revenue Code giving them unlimited powers without a right of appeal to the ryots against the decisions of the Revenue Authorities. Exercise of these powers in a case like the one before us, in which the ryots are fighting for a principle and the authorities for prestige, would be a prostitution of justice, of a disavowal of all fair play. These powers are :

(1) Right of summary execution.
(2) Right of exacting a quarter of the assessment as punishment.
(3) Right of confiscation of land, not merely *rayatwari* but even *inami* or *sanadia*, and the right of keeping a man under *hajat*.

Those remedies may be applied singly or all together, and unbelievable though it may seem to the public, it may be mentioned that notices of the application of all these remedies but the last have been issued. Thus a man owning two hundred acres of land in perpetuity and valued at thousands of rupees, paying a small assessment rate, may at the will of the authority lose the whole of it, because for the sake of principle he respectfully refuses voluntarily to pay the assessment himself and is prepared meekly but under strong protest to penalties that may be inflicted by law. Surely vindictive confiscation of property ought not to be the reward for orderly disobedience which, properly handled, can only result in progress all round and in giving the Government a bold and a frank peasantry with a will of its own.

I venture to invite the Press and the public to assist these cultivators of Kaira who have dared to enter up a fight for what they consider is just and right. Let the public remember this also that unprecedentally severe plague has decimated the population of Kaira. People are living outside their homes in specially prepared thatched cottages at considerable expense to themselves. In some villages mortality has been tremendous. Prices are ruling

high of which, owing to the failure of crops, they can but tak little advantage and have to suffer all the disadvantages thereo It is not money they want so much as the voice of a strong unanimous and emphatic public opinion.[1]

The Hindu, 1-4-1918

197. SPEECH AT HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN[2]

[INDORE
March 29, 1918

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Our most venerable and selfless leader Pandit Madan Moha Malaviya has not found it possible to attend this Conference. had requested him to come if he could and he promised to d so. But though he has not been able to come he has sent us letter. I was sure that in case he did not come, he would send letter stating his views, and it would be possible for me to rea it out to you. I have received the letter today. I had asked th reception committee to secure the views of scholars on two questio in regard to Hindi. Panditji in his letter has replied to these tw questions.[3]

The question of language presents a big and indeed a ver important problem. Even if all the leaders were to devo themselves entirely to this task turning away from everythin else, they well may. If on the other hand, we were to regar it as of secondary importance only and to direct our attentic away from it then all the enthusiasm which people now feel fo it and the keen interest they are taking in it at present woul be in vain.

Language is like our mother. But we do not have that lo for it, as we have for our mother. In fact I have no re interest in this sort of a conference. It will be a three day pageant after which we shall disperse, go away to our respecti places and forget all that we said and heard. What is need is the urge and the resolve to do things. The president's spee cannot give you that urge. It is something which you ha

[1] The statement was also published in *Young India*, 3-4-1918.

[2] Gandhiji delivered this address in Hindi while presiding over the 8 session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held at the Town Hall, Indore.

[3] At this point, Gandhiji read out Pandit Malaviya's letter expressi his conviction that Hindi was the lingua franca of India.

to create for yourselves. One of the charges made against us is that our language lacks spirit. Where there is no knowledge there is no spirit. We have neither the urge to know nor to do things. It is only when we acquire dynamic energy that our people and our language also will acquire it. We cannot get the freedom we want through a foreign language for the simple reason that we are not able to use it effectively. I am pleased to know that in Indore you carry on all your dealings through Hindi. But —excuse me please—the letter I have received from your Chief Minister is in English. The people of Indore perhaps do not know— but I will tell them—that here the courts entertain petitions written in Hindi, but strangely enough the pleaders conduct their arguments and the judges deliver their judgments in English. I ask why it should be so in Indore. I admit that this movement—the movement for the adoption of Hindi—cannot yet succeed in British India, but there is no reason why it should not succeed in the Indian States. The educated classes, as Pandit Malaviyaji has pointed out in his letter, have unfortunately fallen under the spell of English and have developed a distaste for their own mother tongue. The milk one gets from the former is adulterated with water and contaminated with poison, while that from the latter is pure. It is impossible to make any advance without this pure milk. But a blind person cannot see and a slave does not know how to break his fetters. We have been living under the spell of English now for the past fifty years. In the result our people have remained steeped in ignorance. The Conference must give special attention to this part of the problem. We should see that within a year conditions are created when not a word of English will be heard in any of our political or social conferences, in the Congress, in the provincial assemblies and the like. Let us abandon the use of English entirely. English has attained the position of a universal language. But that is because the English have spread and established themselves throughout the world. As soon as they lose that position, English will also shrink in its extent. We should no more neglect and thus destroy our own language. The English insist on speaking their mother tongue and using it for all their purposes. Let us do the same and thus raise Hindi to the high status of a national language. Only thus shall we discharge our duty to it. Now I will read out my written speech.

MR. PRESIDENT, DELEGATES, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You have done me great honour in conferring on me the presidentship of this conference. I know only too well that from

the point of view of the knowledge of Hindi, my qualification for this honour are almost nil. The only thing which may be said to qualify me for it is my boundless love of Hindi. I hope that I would always be able to pass this test of love.

The extent of a particular literature can only be reckoned on the basis of the region where that language is spoken. If the region of Hindi remains confined to the Northern part of India the extent of its literature must remain limited. But in case it becomes a national language, the expanse of its literature will become as wide as the country. As the people speaking a particular language, so the language. If we want that high-souled men from the East and the West, from the North and the South, should come to take a dip in the sea of this language, it is obvious tha the sea must first acquire sufficient importance. Therefore the place of Hindi from the point of view of developing a nationa literature needs to be considered.

It is necessary to give some thought to the definition of the Hindi language. I have often said that Hindi is that languag which is spoken in the North by both Hindus and Muslims and which is written either in the Nagari or the Persian script. Thi Hindi is neither too Sanskritized nor too Persianized. The sweetness which I find in the village Hindi is found neither in the speech of the Muslims of Lucknow nor in that of the Hindu pundit of Prayag. The language which is easily understood by the masse is the best. All can easily follow the village Hindi. The source of the river of language lies in the Himalayas of the people. It wil always be so. The Ganga arising from the Himalayas will continue to flow for ever. It is the same with the village Hindi whicl will flow on for ever, while the Sanskritized and Persianized Hind will dry up and fade away, as does a rivulet springing from a smal hillock.

The distinction made between Hindus and Muslims is unrea The same unreality is found in the distinction between Hindi and Urdu. It is unnecessary for Hindus to reject Persian words and fo Muslims to reject Sanskrit words from their speech. A harmoniou blend of the two will be as beautiful as the confluence of th Ganga and the Yamuna and last for ever. I hope that we wi not waste our energy and weaken our strength by entering int the Hindi-Urdu controversy. There is, no doubt, difficulty in regard to script. As things are, Muslims will patronize the Arabi script, while Hindus will mostly use the Nagari script. Both script will therefore have to be accorded their due places. Officials mus know both scripts. There is no difficulty in this. In the end

the script which is the easier of the two will prevail. There is no doubt that there ought to be a common language for mutual intercourse between the different parts of India. Once we forget the Hindi-Urdu controversy, we shall realize that for Muslims throughout India Urdu is the lingua franca. This proves that since Moghul times, Hindi or Urdu was well on its way to becoming the national language of India.

Even today, there is no language to rival Hindi in this respect. The question of national language becomes quite easy of solution once we give up the Hindi-Urdu controversy. Hindus will have to learn some Persian words while Muslims will have to learn some Sanskrit words. This exchange will enrich and strengthen the Islamic language and provide a very fruitful means for bringing Hindus and Muslims closer together. In fact we have to work so hard for dispelling the present fascination for the English language that we must not raise the Hindi-Urdu controversy. Nor must we fight over the script.

Why English cannot become our national language, what harm results from the imposition of English on our people, how our people have suffered and their development has been retarded by the adoption of English as the medium of education—I have dealt with in my speeches at Broach and Bhagalpur. I will not therefore repeat myself here. Indeed there is no doubt that Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Smt. Besant, Lokamanya Tilak and other respected and influential persons entertain similar views regarding this question. There will certainly be difficulties in the way of the achievement of our purpose but it will be for this body to tackle them. Lokamanya Tilak has indeed expressed his views in this regard not only in words but also in action by starting a Hindi section in his papers the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta*. The views of Bharat-ratna Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on this question are quite well known. Still, unfortunately, some of our learned leaders hold that for at least some years to come English must remain the national language. We will respectfully request these leaders to consider that this unreasonable attraction for English is causing much hardship to our people, as they get little benefit out of the knowledge of their English-educated countrymen between whom and them a wide gulf has been created through English.

It is unnecessary to say that I do not hate the English language. I myself have benefited from many of the precious gems of the great treasure of English literature. We have also to acquire a knowledge of science and suchlike through the English language. Knowledge of English is therefore very necessary for us. But it

is one thing to give it its due place and quite another to make a fetish of it.

It is clear that our purpose will not be achieved merely by accepting that Hindi-Urdu should be our national language. We have to consider how we may achieve our goal. The scholars who have graced this assembly by their presence will certainly have something to say on this point. I will make a few suggestion on how we may spread this language. There must first be a handy book—sort of a "Hindi Teacher" which will meet the need of those who want to learn Hindi. I have seen a small book o this type for those who want to learn Hindi through Bengali There is one in Marathi also. But I have not seen any such book for other regional languages. This is as easy to do as it is necessary I hope that this Sammelan will soon take up this work. Of course these books should be written by learned and experienced writers

The greatest difficulty will be felt in the case of the Southern languages. No effort whatever in this direction has yet been made there. We must train good Hindi teachers to take up th work. There is a great scarcity of such teachers. I have secured one such teacher from Prayag through your popular secretary Bhai Purushottamdasji Tandon.

Similarly, I have not yet seen a single complete grammar of th Hindi language. Such as exist are in English and have bee written by foreigners. One of these grammars is by Dr. Kellog There must be a good Hindi grammar which can compare favour ably with similar grammars of other Indian languages. It is m humble request to scholars who love Hindi to make up thi deficiency.

In our national councils Hindi alone should be used. Congres workers and leaders can and should do much in this respect. would suggest that this Conference should make a request to th effect to the Congress at its next session.

In our legislative bodies too the entire proceedings should b conducted through the national language. Our people cannc have training in political affairs so long as this is not done. Ou Hindi newspapers are doing something in this respect but th education we want to be imparted to our people cannot be give through translations. Similarly in our courts too the nationa and provincial languages must be used. Under the existing set-u people are being deprived of the education which they can easil receive from those who administer justice.

The Princes can promote the national language in a way i which the English Government cannot. In the Holkar State, fo

example, in the Council and in the courts, Hindi and the provincial language alone could be used. The encouragement they thus give to the national language will go a long way in helping it to progress. In the schools of this State the entire education from the beginning to the end should be imparted through the mother tongue. In this way our Princes can render much service to the language. I hope that Maharaja Holkar and his officials will take up this great work enthusiastically.[1]

It will be a sad delusion to think that we can achieve our objective merely through conferences. Single-minded devotion and constant application alone will bring success. Only when hundreds of selfless scholars regard this work as their own can it be accomplished.

What I regret is that even the provinces which have Hindi for their mother tongue do not seem to show any enthusiasm for its promotion and propagation. The educated classes in these provinces continue to use English for purposes of conversation and correspondence. A friend has written to me that our newspaper proprietors do all their work in English; they keep their accounts, too, in English. Englishmen living in France use their mother tongue in all their dealings. Is it not a pity that we carry on even some of our most important activities in English? It is my humble but firm opinion that unless we give Hindi its national status and the provincial languages their due place in the life of the people, all talk of swaraj is useless. It is my fervent hope and prayer to God Almighty that this Sammelan may be an instrument for the solution of this great question confronting India.

Thoughts on National Language

[1] According to a report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2-4-1918, Gandhiji thanked Maharaja Holkar for his donation of Rs. 10,000 for propagation of Hindi.

198. *SPEECH ON INDIAN CIVILIZATION*

INDORE,
March 30, 1918[1]

We often think that changes of the kind that take place in Europe will also occur in India; that when some big transformation comes about, people who know beforehand how to prepare themselves for it win through and those who fail to take account of this are destroyed; that mere movement is progress and that our advancement lies in it. We think that we shall be able to progress through the great discoveries that have been made in the continent of Europe. But this is an illusion. We are inhabitants of a country which has so long survived with its own civilization. Many a civilization of Europe is destroyed, but India, our country, survives as a witness to its own civilization. All scholars agree in testifying that the civilization of India is the same today as it was thousands of years ago. But, now, there is reason to suspect that we no longer have faith in our civilization. Every morning we do our worship and prayer, recite the verses composed by our forbears, but we do not understand their significance. Our faith is turning in another direction.

So long as the world goes on, the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas will also continue. The books of almost all the religions say that the war between the gods and Satan goes on for ever. The question is how we are to make our preparations. I have come here to tell you that you should have faith in your civilization and keep to it steadfastly. If you do this, India will one day hold sway over the entire world. (Applause.)

Our leaders say that, in order to fight the West, we have to adopt the ways of the West. But please rest assured that it will mean the end of Indian civilization. India's face is turned away from your modern trend; that India you do not know. I have travelled much and so come to know the mind of India and I have discovered that it has preserved its faith in its ancient civilization. The swaraj of which we hear will not be achieved the way we are working for it. The Congress-League Scheme, or any other scheme which is even better, will not get us swaraj. We shall get swaraj

[1] The date is according to the tour itinerary.

through the way in which we live our lives. It cannot be had for the asking. We can never gain it through copying Europe.

That European civilization is Satanic we see for ourselves. An obvious proof of this is the fierce war that is going on at present. It is so terrible that the Mahabharata War was nothing in comparison. This should be a warning to us and we should remember that our sages have given us the immutable and inviolate principles that our conduct should be godly and that it should be rooted in dharma. We should follow these principles alone. So long as we do not follow dharma, our wish will not be fulfilled, notwithstanding all the grandiose schemes we may devise. Even if Mr. Montagu offers us swaraj today we can in no way benefit from that swaraj. We must make use of the legacy left us by our *rishis* and *munis*.

The whole world knows that the *tapasya* that was practised in ancient India is found nowhere else. Even if we want an empire for India, we can get it through no other method but that of self-discipline. We can be certain that once the spirit of discipline comes to pervade our lives, we shall be able to get anything we may want.

Truth and non-violence are our goal. Non-violence is the supreme dharma, there is no discovery of greater import than this. So long as we engage in mundane actions, so long as soul and body are together, some violence will continue to occur through our agency. But we must renounce at least the violence that it is possible for us to renounce. We should understand that the less violence a religion permits, the more is the truth contained in it. If we can ensure the deliverance of India, it is only through truth and non-violence. Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, has said that he feels greatly disappointed when he meets Indians for they do not express what is in their minds but only what would be agreeable to him, so that he never knows the real position. Many people have this habit of hiding their own sentiments when in the presence of an important person and suiting their talk to his pleasure. They do not realize how cruelly they deceive themselves and harm the truth. One must say what one feels. It is impertinence to go against one's reason. One must not hesitate the least to tell what one feels to anyone, be he a Minister of the Government or even a more exalted person. Deal with all with truth and non-violence.

Love is a rare herb that makes a friend even of a sworn enemy and this herb grows out of non-violence. What in a dormant state is non-violence becomes love in the waking state. Love destroys ill will. We should love all—whether Englishmen or

Muslims. No doubt, we should protect the cow. But we cannot do so by fighting with Muslims. We cannot save the cow by killing Muslims. We should act only through love; thus alone shall we succeed. So long as we do not have unshakable faith in truth, love and non-violence, we can make no progress. If we give up these and imitate European civilization, we shall be doomed. I pray to Suryanarayan[1] that India may not turn away from her civilization. Be fearless. So long as you live under various kinds of fears, you can never progress, you can never succeed. Please do not forget our ancient civilization. Never, never give up truth and love. Treat all enemies and friends with love. If you wish to make Hindi the national language, you can do so in a short time through the principles of truth and non-violence.

[From Hindi]

Mahatma Gandhi

199. LETTER TO THE PRESS

INDORE
March 31, 1918

At the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, just closing, a committee consisting of the Hon'ble Rai Bahadur Bishen Dutta Shukla, Rai Bahadur Saryoo Prasad, Babu Shiva Prasad Gupta, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon, Babu Gauri Shanker Prasad, Pandit Venkatesha Narayan Tiwari and myself were appointed as a special committee to give effect to certain resolutions of the Sammelan. One of the instructions given to the committee is to find out six Tamil and Telugu youths of promise and good character who would undertake to learn Hindi with a view to ultimately becoming missionaries for the propagation of Hindi among the Tamil and the Telugu people. It has been proposed to locate them either at Allahabad or at Benares, and to teach them Hindi. Expenses of their board and lodging as well as instruction will be paid for by the committee. It is expected that the course will not take longer than a year at the most and, as soon as they have attained a certain standard of knowledge of Hindi, they would be entrusted with the missionary work, that is, the work of teaching Hindi to the Tamil or the Telugu people, as the case may be, for which they

[1] The Lord in the form of the sun

would get a salary to maintain themselves suitably. The committee will guarantee such service for at least a period of three years, and will expect applicants to enter into a contract with the committee to render the stipulated service faithfully and well for that period. The committee expects that the services of these youths will be indefinitely prolonged and that they will be able to serve themselves as well as the country. The desire of the committee is to offer liberal payment and expect in return absolute faithfulness and steadfastness. I trust that you agree with the Sammelan that Hindi and Hindi alone, whether in Sanskrit form or as Urdu, can become the language of intercourse between the different provinces. It is already that amongst the Mahomedans all over India, as also amongst the Hindus except in the Madras Presidency. I exclude the English-educated Indians who have made English, in my humble opinion, much to the detriment of the country, the language of mutual intercourse. If we are to realize the swaraj ideal, we must find a common language that can be easily learnt and that can be understood by the vast masses. This has always been Hindi or Urdu and is so even now, as I can say from personal experience. I have faith enough in the patriotism, selflessness and the sagacity of the people of the Madras Presidency to know that those, who at all want to render national service or to come in touch with the other Provinces, will undergo the sacrifice, if it is one, of learning Hindi. I suggest that they should consider it a privilege to be able to learn a language that will enable them to enter into the hearts of millions of their countrymen. The proposal set forth is a temporary makeshift. An agitation of great potency must arise in the country that would compel the educational authorities to introduce Hindi as the second language in the public schools. But it was felt by the Sammelan that no time should be lost in popularizing Hindi in the Madras Presidency. Hence the above-mentioned proposal which, I hope, you will be able to commend to your readers. I may add that the committee proposes to send Hindi teachers to the Tamil as also to the Andhra districts in order to teach Hindi free of charge to those who would care to learn it. I hope that many will take advantage of the proffered tuition. Those youths who wish to apply for the training above mentioned should do so under cover addressed to me care of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad, before the end of April.

200. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

NADIAD
April 1, 1918

You have perhaps read my statement about Kaira.[2] The struggle is one against the attempt of the officials to crush the spirit of the people. In the circumstances, I think it is our clear duty to assist the cultivators. War cannot be allowed to cover oppression. I understand that there will be a public meeting in Bombay to express sympathy for the people. I hope that, if you at all can, you will attend the meeting and speak at it.[3]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

201. SPEECH AT KATHANA

April 1, 1918

The Government says it is determined to collect the revenue. I say : "Recover it from our lands, seize our goods or take us into custody, but we do not wish to contradict ourselves by paying up the dues of our own accord." In this fight, those who have justice on their side shall win. As long as I am alive, I will fight for you. There is no talk yet of confiscating lands; they have their

[1] Sastri's reply refers to this.

[2] The reference is to the "Statement to the Press on Kheda Situation" 28-3-1918.

[3] To this Sastri replied as follows: "I have received your letter dated Nadiad on the 1st of April. Need I say I am sensible of the honour it conveys? I have no desire to pit my judgment against that of people better qualified by experience and local knowledge. But you would not like me to act except as my judgment approved, especially in important matters. Frankly, I am not satisfied of the expediency of passive resistance in the Kaira affair, even allowing that the rights of the case were with the ryots. I do not, however, approve of coercion by Govt. In fact, I pressed the urgent call for a conciliatory policy as strongly as I could both on Sir Ibrahim Rahimtullah and Sir James Duboulay, when I saw them yesterday. I am grieved to hesitate instead of springing to your side at your call. But I know, at the same time, you would not wish me in the circumstances to do what I cannot heartily approve." For Gandhiji's reply to this, *vide* "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 5-4-1918.

eye only on jewellery, buffaloes or movable property. There will be no great loss in this. If the Government, for recovering ten rupees, takes away land worth a thousand rupees through confiscation, even God will not bear it.[1]

You have married your husbands, not their jewellery or the cattle. It is your dharma to help your husbands to observe their pledge.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

202. LETTER TO RESIDENTS OF KATHANA

[After *April 1, 1918*]

I got the news of the auction of your goods. I can very well understand that you will not find it easy to bear your losses. I feel, all the same, that this is the only way for us to rise. I should like you to bear your grief over your losses patiently and cheerfully. If the Government has inflicted the *chothai*, we shall fight it out and I am confident that we shall get the amounts back. I congratulate you on the courage you have shown in letting your goods be auctioned. I am sure your sacrifice will be duly rewarded. I hope all friends will boldly adhere to their word. May God give you divine strength and fortitude to fight this battle of truth to a successful end.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

203. SPEECH AT LIMBASI

April 2, 1918

We call the fight satyagraha. We have made truth our weapon; hence, if you tell lies and deceive me, we shall go down and all over the country they will say that ours was a cowardly fight. Let those who have not paid the full amount of the Government dues raise their hands;[2] and those who have paid the full amount raise theirs.[3] This proves that most of the farmers have not paid

[1] Gandhiji addressed the words that follow to the women present.

[2] Some 200 hands were raised.

[3] Only three responded.

the dues. Indeed, this is a matter for joy. If such a large numb of people remain firm, victory is ours. We should know what mean by "victory". What are we fighting for? We are fighti so that the Government may suspend the collection of revenu Where crops are less than four annas, the full amount of the asse ment should be suspended and, where they have been betwe four and six annas, half the amount should be suspended; that the law. Many have had less than four annas yield, but some them have paid up half the amount. Our fight is to see that th don't have to pay the remainder. The Government says that, most places, crops have been more than six annas; that being view, we request the Government, in the interests of justice, appoint a committee of inquiry; this the Government refuses to The question, here, is not merely one of land revenue. I am pain to see that the Government should always insist that it is in right and the people are in the wrong. This bespeaks a state slavery [for us]. We shall endure it no longer; of course, y won't. That is how you should feel. We are fighting that y may taste the joy of freedom. The people's will is pitted agai the Government's. Our stubbornness is in a right cause, hei we call it satyagraha. If, in the fight, the Government attac all our property and even then we do not pay the revenue, victory will be ours. Let the women give the same advice their husbands. If our crops have been less than what the Gove ment says they are, we should stand firm in the truth we have stat If, out of fear of others, a man does what he ought not to, he be ruined in his soul. The true end of human effort, real mai ness, consists in not acting thus. We are not slaves; we are fr The Government says that, if the people are allowed to raise th heads once, they will always hold them high. But people have time to go about unnecessarily raising their heads in defiance. much of their time is taken up in earning their bread. We fi through voluntary suffering. If any millionaire should offer to p up the land revenue for you, you should flatly refuse the of Such help brings us down. People should fight with their o strength. They should find their happiness in their sufferi All the help I can give is to share in your suffering, give you experience and advise you; more than this, I cannot do. It is you to fight. If you don't have peace or are not happy, we share in all that you suffer. If you are caught in a fire, how we be happy? You may possibly be frightened by the notices may shake with fear because the crops have been attached b if you face the situation calmly and smilingly, the Governm

will find it impossible to act in this manner again. The Government is doing all this to terrorize you. Our Hindu scriptures speak of many examples of sacrifice for the sake of truth.

If the farmers of Limbasi allow themselves to be ruined for the sake of truth, we shall say that the story of Nalaraja was true, that we have today hundreds of Nalarajas in Limbasi. Don't mind if they have attached the barns. Let them confiscate the lands. It will be a golden day for us when, deprived of our lands, we issue forth from our villages with drums joyfully beating before us, for then it will be proved that you had fulfilled your pledge. We shall not permit those who lose their all to starve. If you have to go without food, I and hundreds like me will starve with you. If you submit to suffering, happiness will come seeking you. This is a law of nature.

When people have to submit to oppression by the *Talati*, the village chiefs and *ravanias*[1], what else can we expect from the *mamlatdar*? And the Collector : how dare one set one's eyes on him? This is a mistaken notion under which you are labouring. There is no law requiring you to live in fear of the officers. If we are not afraid, the law cannot punish us either. We should fear only God.

Those who become the victims of oppression need not get frightened. This is the first time we are fighting the Government. Ours is a fight for truth. Indulal[2] and Hariprasad will remain in this taluka. You may keep them informed of what you have to suffer. In other talukas, too, we shall make similar arrangements. We shall issue handwritten leaflets every day, in which we shall report the developments from day to day. This will assure you that we do not waste a single second, but spend all our time in your cause. A meeting is to be held in Bombay next Friday to discuss this matter.[3] Gradually, the whole of India will wake up and the credit for this will go to you. The Kheda district has shown the way for the good of the whole of India. When the farmers declare that they are men and have courage enough, that they are prepared for sacrifices for the sake of truth, I shall say they are not men, but gods. I wish you victory.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

[1] Errand-men

[2] Indulal Yagnik; an active political worker; Gandhiji later took over *Navajivan* from him.

[3] The meeting was later postponed, *vide* the following item.

204. SPEECH AT KARAMSAD

April 4, 1

When we met in Nadiad a few days ago and resolved on sat graha, I said that I would have to go to Delhi for the sake Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali. It may seem that I take bu casual interest in this issue but I alone know how much, in fa I am occupied with it. Of the guests present here, Shri Shua is among the same class of persons as the two brothers. I saic the meeting of the Muslim League that, wherever I move in Inc I embrace with love all Muslims who have their minds fixed Allah and who recognize the truth. My friends Mahomed Ali a Shaukat Ali are in this class. It was in the course of my eff to get to know these brothers[2] that I encountered Shri Shu He has come here at my instance. He is a man of learning an friend of truth. He has spared himself no sacrifice.

In what terms shall I introduce to you the other friends? own brothers are dead; but we have here Shri Rajendra Bal on seeing whom I forget their loss. He has given me love such I can never forget. Shri Badrinath Verma also belongs to Bi the land of King Janak. Sister Anandibai has made up for want of a daughter. She is a widow. She is still studying. Champaran, when I felt the need for women workers, Dr. made me a present of Anandibai. Let us plan our satyagr in the presence of these witnesses.

Bombay is the abode of the rich. It is difficult to explai them the meaning of satyagraha, and more difficult still to exp it to the Bombay Government, for it always confronts us with s legal point or other. However, as a result of the recent delib tions, a committee has been appointed. They will wait on Government. The idea of a public meeting in Bombay has l put off for some time. I don't like to leave you and gc Bombay. I can bring myself to go nowhere, leaving you. not with Bombay's help that we want to win this fight. If farmers of Kheda should drop off one by one, out of fear o

[1] Shuaib Qureshi, editor of *New Era.*

[2] The original has: "while searching for these brothers".

[3] Rajendra Prasad, (1884-1963); prominent Congress leader, and Pres of India, 1950-62

Government, how will help from Bombay avail? Tell them confidently that yours is a struggle in a just cause and that you are prepared for any sacrifice for it.

It was indeed good that I brought with me these guests. This is Vallabhbhai's native place. Vallabhbhai is still in the fire and will have to endure a good deal of heat, but I think out of this all we shall have gold in the end. Let your good wishes go with him. It was good of you to have treated him to a dinner of *ladus*[1] but, to crown it all, you need to offer *dakshina*[2]; this can only be that you do not pay the Government a single pie; let it, if it will, drown you in that lake or throw you into fire.

It is a very good thing that this meeting is being attended by agriculturists from the Baroda State. If we lose our lands in satyagraha, I hope they will offer theirs to us. If we say that the crops have been less than four annas, how can we bear that the Government should exact from us a single pie? There is also another issue in this struggle, and that is whether the Government's view should prevail or the people's. The subjects' loyalty to their Government consists in resisting the obduracy of officers. We have to be men. Now that we have woken up, we must take thought what we do. Great changes are taking place in the country. Abroad, terrible bloodshed is going on. In the war in Europe, the British have proved themselves a brave people. We want to be partners of these heroes. We shall command respect as such only if, in company with them, we make ourselves a heroic people. If we do not, we shall affect them as well with unmanliness. If we become abject, we shall make them so. We are waging this fight in order to awaken the country and teach the people the lesson of satyagraha.

In a fight, one does not become brave by taking up arms. Arms may be there, but they will be useless to those who are cowards in their hearts. Heroism–fearlessness–lies in a man bearing sword-cuts without shrinking. This kind of heroism is possible to all men, women and children. I want the agriculturists of Kheda to have it. Our weapon is an uncompromising insistence on truth. Let the agriculturists of Kheda sacrifice their all rather than pay the land revenue. I am confident the agriculturists here, at Karamsad, will never turn their backs. We are to submit to suffering, to sacrifice our possessions. To be sure, we may feel

[1] Sweets

[2] Gift offered to a priest or a Brahmin

concerned what we shall have for food. He who has given teeth will provide the food.[1]

We are to sacrifice our all in this struggle. All the same, th(who, with motives none too clean, lay their hands on our lar will not be happy with them. If the Government does so, we sh turn ourselves outlaws in defiance. If, to recover revenue of hundred rupees, they seize land worth ten thousand, the man w bids for it will not profit from it. This Government is not based robbery, but justice. The day I learn that it is deliberately r for plunder, be sure I shall turn disloyal to it. Why have t fear, what you would do if deprived of your lands? Nobody v ever find it profitable to appropriate our lands.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

205. LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN

[Before *April 5, 19*

DEAR MR. NATARAJAN[2],

It grieves me to find that sometimes you jump to hurried c clusions and will not have the patience to hear the other si This, I venture to think, adversely affects your capacity for natio service which I know you always want to render. Take this Kа affair. I do not mind your differing from me. On the contrа I honour you for your stating your convictions even though it r hurt you to have to hold them in opposition to your friends. complaint however is against the haste with which you form y conclusions. You do not know the inwardness of the Kaira stru; and you have no time to study it. There was the Godhra C ference[3] in which the masses for the first time took an active p Some of these men, at the end of the Conference, twitted the lea with these remarks : "What is the use of your holding Conferei and inviting us? Kaira is face to face with practically a fai of crops. The *raiyats* are entitled to suspension. What are people doing in the matter?" Some of the listeners accepted rebuke as well deserved and undertook to move in the ma

[1] At this point, questions were put to Gandhiji. What follows is his to one of them.

[2] Kamakshi Natarajan, editor of *Indian Social Reformer*

[3] *Vide* "Speech at Social Conference, Godhra", 5-11-1917.

Hence the petition[1] signed by thousands for suspension. This petition alone should have been sufficient to warrant suspension which would have meant merely loss of interest to the Government, but the gaining of goodwill in return. The officials, however, took a dubious and a devious course. They set about getting *annawari patraks*[2] of which I can say that most of them will not bear a close scrutiny. The *raiyats* have exhausted every means at their disposal for getting relief. Each time these faulty documents are flung in their faces. What are they to do? To sell their cattle, trees or other belongings and to quietly pay the revenue? I would defy you to be on the scene as I have been and to advise the *raiyats* to do so. You must know the methods that are employed in order to exact payment from *raiyats* when they have no crops. I could not calmly contemplate an emasculation of the *raiyats* taking place in front of me. Nor could you. I hold that it is a perfectly constitutional, just and righteous thing for a people to say, "Since you reject our petitions and if we have to pay, we can only pay by borrowing or selling our belongings." You have only to come and see with what perfectly good humour the fight is being carried on, how the people are steeling their hearts for any kind of loss and how elderly men and women, too, are taking part in the demonstration. You at least ought to see that this self-inflicted suffering must exalt the nation, whereas the same suffering unwillingly undergone hitherto has only degraded the nation. This is a bread-agitation. What is the use of a thousand meetings in India, praying for redress if they are to tell the people calmly to denude themselves of their trees or their cattle or their ornaments whilst a constitutional agitation is being carried on? It is like giving them stone when they asked for bread.

I wish this letter would prick your conscience, stimulate your inquiring spirit, bring you to Kaira and see the campaign in working. I would then not only be prepared to *submit* to, but would *invite*, your report no matter how adverse it may be to the cause. I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that you have at least studied the question. You owe this to yourself, to a friend, and to the nation. If you cannot give this much time to the cause, you must have no business to hold any opinion on the Kaira affair.

[1] This was first submitted by the agriculturists of Kathalal on November 15, 1917. Later, similar petitions signed by over 18,000 agriculturists were sent to Government.

[2] Statements of assessment on the basis of so many annas in the rupee

I hope you will pardon me for my presumption in writing you as I have done. As I have told you so often, I always deavour to secure your co-operation and help in my work anc should be satisfied not to have it if you withhold it after full c sideration. You ought not to be led astray by the term "pass resistance". You have got a concrete case. Judge it on its meri

Yours sincere

M. K. GAN

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan De

206. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

April 5, 1

I thank you for your note.[2] However anxious I may be to your approbation for any conduct of mine, I share your anxi that your conscience may not in any way be coerced. I know t you will keep in touch with the Kaira affairs as they develop fr day to day.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan D

207. SPEECH AT VADATHAL

April 5, 1

From the very beginning, the village of Vadathal has take leading part in this struggle. I have moved from farm to f here and assured myself that on the average the crop in village is less than four annas. The Collector came over for a f inquiry. I wrote to him that I had ascertained the facts my and found that the crop was less than four annas, but he did agree with me.

[1] Of this letter Mahadev Desai says in his Diary: "Bapu was that Natarajan will feel bad. Bapu read the letter again. Two sent were left incomplete. I was rebuked: 'I would take it that at least would draw my attention to this—why didn't you?' I said: 'I had sh it to Vallabhbhai and Banker.' Bapu said: 'But, it is all right. He will say I do not know how to write. However, the argument is there. I have wr this letter to shock his intellect, not to hurt him. The letter asks: Bro why your intellect refuses to work?'"

[2] *Vide* footnote to "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 1-4-1918.

I have told him that ours is a struggle through self-suffering. I have seen people suffer in satyagraha much more than you do. I shall have you swallow bitter draughts. You should celebrate the days on which they sell your buffaloes here, auction away your things and confiscate your belongings. If anyone in Vadathal is jailed, the prison will have been sanctified. Especially the women should have a feast when their husbands go to jail.

Notices of confiscation have been issued, by way of threats; in spite of them, we remain the owners of our lands. Whatever the value of these lands, we should not falter ever so little in our duty. In case you should lose your all in this struggle, not one of you will be allowed to starve. We shall go and beg but provide for you. Bear your sufferings for the sake of your pledge.

If I pay you money for the buffaloes, I and all of you will have deceived the people. It will be wrong if we help you financially so that you may join the satyagraha. We can stand by you, keep up your courage and give you our moral support when the Government takes repressive measures against you. I want to rid you of the unmanliness that has come to possess you. I want to bring back the olden days in India.

If in ancient times we had a Sita, this age, too, I believe, should produce one. If at one time we had a Ramachandra, such a one as flowers but once in an age, the modern age, too, should produce another like him in this country. This should be a part of our heritage. You know the stories of Harishchandra and Dhruva. We may not be able to do all that Harishchandra did, but something of him is bound to have come down to us. Let the women here, too, understand the utmost importance of a pledge. If they are not firm enough to hold to a pledge once taken, their children, too, will grow up to have no spirit in them. The God who has created us will have justice done to us. If, moreover, we stand firm in this struggle, we shall by and by be able to secure the reins of Government as well in our hands. If I should have to die for saving the agriculturists of Vadathal, I would be only too happy to do so.

I am not unaware that at present your buffaloes are being sold against land revenue dues. There have been many other cases in which people have paid land revenue by selling off their buffaloes. That you may not have to endure such misery year after year, you may let the Government sell the buffaloes for this once. It is welcome to do so, this year. Next year, rest assured, it will not find

it possible to sell your buffaloes or subject you to any other ha ships.

Even the birds and beasts have a sense of self-respect and are human beings. See, therefore, that you do not fail in y pledge. Things were explained to you so very clearly before took it. Though we have the help of the rich in this strug to fight with their help is much like a man looking stout beca of swellings on his person. Have faith in God; if we tread path of right and justice, God will protect us. Be it justice money, we can have it from none but Him.

Consider, now, the condition of those who are working am you. There is not a single moment in the twenty-four hours w I am not thinking of the satyagraha in Kheda. Dr. Hariprasad made his home here. There was no dearth of public work for in Ahmedabad. He has left aside all these things and has co here to take up the work and live in your midst. As you Shri Vallabhbhai and Shri Keshavprasad have just arrived fi Mahudha.

Two friends have come all the way from Champa They have come from the land of King Janak, eager to see I hope you will not forget all these things and bring discredi Vadathal.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

208. LETTER TO A YOUNG MAN

NAD

Phagan Vad 10 [April 6, 1

BHAISHRI,

I got Polak's cable about you and have also received a r on the subject. I have had long talks with Shri . . . .[1] He have written to you all about it. You had better have s patience. He promises that he will certainly release you. should suffice. He says it will do harm if the thing is n public right now.

And yes, there is one thing more. We do hope you will well, and, if you do, it is everyone's wish that you should rais objections to marrying. I am the first to wish this. I merely

[1] The omission is in the source,

to make this clear about you, that, if you refuse to marry, . . .[1] it will be for reasons of health, that there will be no other reason. This will give the father peace and . . .[2] will be happy in . . .[3] life. Banish all anxiety and improve your health. If you are ever so little unfit, no one will press you [to marry]. I should like you to agree to this cheerfully out of regard for your well-wishers, but not at the risk of your health.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

209. SPEECH AT KHEDA

April 6, 1918

One had far better lay down one's life for the sake of truth; but, out of fear of economic loss, to submit to oppression like the animals—there is nothing so despicable as this. Let the women do their duty, standing beside their husbands in this fight for truth and holding them firmly to their course.

[From Gujarati]
Kheda Satyagraha

210. SPEECH AT UTTARSANDA[4]

April 6, 1918

It was my hope that women also would be present at this meeting. In this work there is as much need of women as of men. If women join our struggle and share our sufferings, we can do fine work.

I see that people's enthusiasm is mounting. This is a people's fight and, once the people have come to understand things, the Government may fight on as long as it chooses, we shall not be defeated. Now at last the time has come when we can see if people have courage. Our goods are being attached and buffaloes taken away; hardships such as these purify us as fire purifies gold.

[1], [2] & [3] The omissions are in the source.

[4] Gandhiji visited Uttarsanda, accompanied by Kasturba Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel, Mahadev Desai, Shankarlal Banker and Anasuyabehn. The audience consisted of a couple of thousand farmers.

In this struggle, you are being taught courage, firmness an‹ patience.

The Government has resorted to every possible repressiv measure in this town. But we want to show to the world that w have some mettle in us, have the strength to suffer and that, i fulfilling our pledge, we shall spare ourselves nothing. Uttarsand is all *Patidars* and, if this fight is to be won, it is only your com munity that will do so. They have seen good days as well as bac I should like to see you go bravely through this struggle.] bespeaks your sense of honour that you have joined this struggl‹

Some may advise you to try your strength with weapons, bı remember that he who can wield a stick can also ward off a blo with one. I want you to use your strength well and in a rigł cause. It is very much to be desired that a 'satyagrahi arm is formed, ever ready to fight for the honour of India. The natio is entitled to expect much from your town, inhabited by s many strong and brave men.

I am having these days a wonderful experience of the ama ing strength the people of Kheda District possess. If all frien‹ abide by the sacred pledge they have taken in this struggle, the is not the least doubt that we should have swaraj in twenty-foı hours.

And so I have but one request to make to you all. Let tl Government auction your household utensils, your bedsteac your cattle; but don't be shaken in your purpose, ever. I wa this promise from you. I crave this gift. You will please n if you give it. To honour your pledge, you have to fight on wi love in your heart to sustain you. I have drawn you into saty graha because I have recognized your strength. Do reassure r gladly and unreservedly, with a cheerful face.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

211. SPEECH AT NAVAGAM[1]

April 7, 1918

We are coming here straight from Torana. The agriculturists there are holding out quite as well as those in Navagam and elsewhere in Dasakosi [taluka]. I am sure that despite the heavy assault on it, Torana will not fall. Keep up this struggle which is based on truth. See that the women go with you in all that you do. Their courage and fortitude will serve us well. If we have to yield, because they are afraid of losing their buffaloes, we shall have no place to stand on. If they give us courage, we shall win. The first step towards swaraj is to abide by the sacred pledge we have taken. Swaraj consists in the very fact of having acquired such strength. It is our duty to know and to safeguard our rights. This is a struggle to compel the Government to respect popular feeling and acknowledge our rights.

We should not cross the bounds of common decency in this struggle. Comlpaints have been received about some of us having harassed the officers. Untruth, discourtesy and arrogant harassment of others are unbecoming of us. They betray lack of discipline. Through this struggle, we have to learn to behave with respect and courtesy towards others. Satyagraha must display the qualities of truthfulness and courtesy.

Truthfulness, courage and zeal are indispensable in this fight. Again, one cannot hold out unless one puts all one's heart into it. These qualities will not spill over if we cover them with the lid of courtesy. Our pledge is not for a few months only, but for an indefinite period. So long as the Government does not accede to our request, we shall not retreat a single inch but lose all that we have. You ought to have immovable faith, not in me or anyone else, but in yourselves. This is not a struggle merely to secure suspension of land revenue, but to see that the pledge behind it is honoured. We are to show through this fight who will have the last word, the Government or we. So long as the Government has not the support of the people, it will not find it possible to hold out. The satisfaction you would derive from having honoured your pledge, you will not get from your lands. Minstrels and bards

[1] Gandhiji visited the village along with his party in the course of his tour. Over 3,000 agriculturists had gathered to listen to him.

will sing of your prowess and their songs will inspire your chil ren too to heroism. You will pass on to them, as a pricel legacy, the temper which regards a pledge as a sacred obligatic Fight like brave ones to honour the pledge you have taken. T key to swaraj for India lies in this.

To suffer for the sake of truth and win immortal fame, tl is your truest duty today; in that lies your honour and that India.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

212. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING

ON THE TRA
April 8, 1:

DEAR ESTHER,

I seem to have been cruelly neglectful in my corresponde with you. I could not be satisfied with giving only a line to y I wanted to give you a long love-letter. I have not the quiet framing such a letter. And I dare not wait any longer.

I do not know how I can describe my activities not one which is of my own seeking. They have all come to me wit persistence I dare not oppose. What is a soldier to do if h hemmed in on all sides? Is he to concentrate his effort on deal with one attack only and to court extinction by ignoring the ot attacks that are being simultaneously delivered? Obviously sa lies in dealing with all in the best way he can. Such is aln my position. Distress pleads before me from all sides. I c not refuse help where I know the remedy.

The Ahmedabad strike provided the richest lessons of The power of love was never so effectively demonstrated to as it was during the lock-out. The existence of God was real by the mass of men before me as soon as the fast was decla Your telegram was the most touching and the truest of all. Tl four days were to me days of peace, blessing and spiritual uplift There never was the slightest desire to eat during those days.

The Kaira affair you must have understood from my le to the Press.[1] I wrote one on the fast too.[2] If you have not the letters, please let me know.

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press on Kheda Situation", 28-3-1918.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to the Press", 27-3-1918.

I hope you are keeping well. In liver complaints nothing answers so well as fasting.

Please address your letters to Ahmedabad or rather Sabarmati.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

My Dear Child, pp. 26-7

213. LETTER TO DURGA DESAI

April 8, 1918

CHI. DURGA[1],

Even if you have forgotten me, I have not forgotten you. Anandibehn gave me news of you. You have been separated from Mahadev longer than I thought. I have told him that he can go there whenever he likes; but if you so wish, I am prepared to send him at once. I should tell you, all the same, that Mahadev has been passing through experiences which will mean so much to him. You will also share in his gain. If you can take comfort in this thought and get over your sadness at separation, he may stay on. But there is one danger in this. If I should get busy with a struggle even greater than the present one, he would not be in a position to go, much as you might desire. This is, therefore, the right time for him to go and see you. If you feel bored there, you can come over here, though it is a little doubtful whether you will like being in Nadiad. You will certainly not have here what you are having there. I should like you to do whatever will please you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Mahadev Desai's wife, who joined the teaching staff at Bhitiharwa School in Champaran on February 1. She had volunteered to serve there for six months.

214. LETTER TO HARIBHAI DESAI[1]

April 8, 1

DEAR FRIEND,

I thought of writing to you many days ago but could get time; the idea also went out of my mind. I hope you forgive me.

I beg leave to say that you have committed no mistake sending over Mahadev to me. This experience was necessary his growth in life. Money is not always the only thing necess for one's happiness. It is not in Mahadev's nature to find happiness in money. I think what is true of him will also be with Durga, by and by. Mahadev has been passing throu invaluable experiences.

So far as I am concerned, the coming over of both has b nothing but a gain. Mahadev has relieved me of many of worries. I was in search of a loving helpmate of his charac and learning. Having got Mahadev, I have succeeded in search. I did not think even in my dreams that it would possible for me to find such good use for Chi. Durga's services. scrutable are the ways of God.

I wish, I beg of you, that you will not worry yourself account of these two but give them your full blessings.

Yours, etc.,
MOHANDAS GAN

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Father of Mahadev Desai

215. MESSAGE ON NATIONAL EDUCATION[1]

April 8, 1918

If people can be made to understand what is truly National Education and to cultivate a taste for it, the Government schools will be empty; and there will be no return thereto until the character of education in Government institutions is so radically altered as to accord with national ideals.

The Indian Review, April 1918

216. SPEECH AT BORSAD[2]

April 8, 1918

Mr. Gandhi said that the Government might take the revenue from the people with their consent and not by harassing them. He emphatically said that the British could not be a blind rule.

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-4-1918

217. LETTER TO N. M. JOSHI[3]

[NADIAD,]
April 9, 1918

DEAR FRIEND,

I have just heard that you have been saying to friends that it was only out of regard for me that you did not contradict me when I said that the result of your inquiry was the same as mine, so far as the *annawari* was concerned and that you [think] that I was uselessly making the people suffer. I should be sorry if what I have heard is true. You have every right and you owe it to a friend, as I deem myself to be to you, to say what you feel. In public life there may arise hundreds of occasions when friends must

[1] This was among the messages read out by Annie Besant at the inauguration of the National Education Week at Gokhale Hall, Madras.

[2] Gandhiji, accompanied by his party, visited the village. He addressed a meeting of some 4,000 agriculturists.

[3] Narayan Malhar Joshi; pioneer of the trade-union movement in India; prominent worker of Servants of India Society

differ and still remain friends. Do please therefore tell me wh you have been saying to the Committee there and otherwise t what your opinion is on the whole of my activity. I know you w not mind if it does not convince me (assuming it is advers You will believe me when I say that it will have due weight w: me.

Yours sincerel
M. K. GANI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan D

218. *MESSAGE TO HINDI CLASS*[1]

[NADIA
April 10, 1

I WISH EVERY SUCCESS (TO) YOUR EFFORT. FEEL SURE (THE) DECC WILL LEAD THE WAY AS IN SO MANY CASES IN RECOGNIZ. HINDI AS COMMON MEDIUM AND THUS SAVE INDIA LOSS IMMENSE NERVE-ENERGY REQUIRED (IN THE) USE ENGLISH.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Nara Desai; also, Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1918

219. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*[2]

NADI
April 10, 1

I am daily expecting your promised reply regarding brothers.

You may know that I am engaged in a domestic quarrel v the local authority on the Kheda crops. I am hoping that cry of the people will have its due weight and that their opir will be respected.

[1] This was sent in reply to a telegram from Dr. Naik reading, "Hindi opens 11th instant in public meeting under Hon. Kamat wish your blessi A "Hindi Shikshan Prasarak Mandal" was inaugurated the following day gathering presided over by B. S. Kamat, in the premises of the New P College, Poona. The words in brackets were added by Mahadev Desai.

[2] This was actually sent on April 14 along with another note; *vide* "L to J. L. Maffey", p. 338.

What vexes me, however, is the case of the brothers Ali. I seem to be ever worrying the administrators in the country when as a respectable citizen of the Empire I should be taking my share in the war. I should have felt happier being in Mesopotamia or France. I twice offered my services but they were not accepted. I feel ashamed that since my arrival in India I can show no war work record in the conventional sense of the term.

On the contrary I seem to be making myself responsible for embarrassing situations and I may find myself in the midst of an agitation which might from its very magnitude cause grave anxiety to the Government. I entertain too great a regard for Lord Chelmsford to wish to add to his anxieties and yet I dare not shirk an obvious duty regarding Ali brothers. Their internment has soured the Muslim section. As a Hindu I feel that I must not stand aloof from them. I must assist in securing the release of the brothers, if I cannot justify the Government's action by producing before the public a case against them. If therefore the Government have a real case against the brothers, it should be produced and the atmosphere cleared. If there is no producible case I cannot help saying that the brothers should be discharged.

If Lord Chelmsford is of opinion that they ought not to be released, the Government must prepare for facing an agitation which must result in the incarceration of the leaders of it. But I plead their discharge with all my strength. The Government can only gain in prestige by responding to public opinion, and so far as danger to the State is concerned I can only say that I should lay down my life for it, if their release should mean any betrayal of trust.

N. A. I.: Home: Political—A: June 1918, No. 359

220. LETTER TO HANUMANTRAO

April 10, 1

MY DEAR HANUMANTRAO,

If Mr. Shastriar sees eye to eye with me regarding Hi I would like you to offer yourself as a scholar under my app and select for me two more Telugus. I have already got t Tamils.

Yours sincer
M. K. GAI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan

221. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK

April 10,

MY DEAR HENRY,

I have not been regularly writing to you. I have neither time nor the energy for writing. I am just now doing so n creative work that the day leaves me exhausted for further ef Writing, making speeches and even talking are painful proce for me. I simply want to brood. A series of passive resista [*sic*] is an agonizing effort—while it lasts. It is an exalting ag I suppose the agony of childbirth must be somewhat like it.

I am asking Mr. Desai to give you details.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan

[1] *Vide* "Letter to the Press", 31-3-1918.

222. LETTER TO HARIHAR SHARMA

April 10, 1918

BHAISHRI ANNA[1],

Your letter made me so very happy indeed. It was such a surprise to me to learn that I am never out of your mind. You, Gomatibehn, and a third person of your own choice—what more could one want? Mahadev will write to you about the rest.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

223. SPEECH AT AKLACHA

April 10, 1918

Some of the boys here are waving flags. Among these I see one adopted by the mill-hands of Ahmedabad, bearing the words: "A pledge is a pledge". They alone are entitled to raise this flag who have that motto engraved in their hearts.

At present, all over India people's eyes are fixed on Kheda district. If it goes under in this struggle, then for a long time the people of India will not be able to stand up. There is wisdom in pausing for reflection before undertaking anything; but, having embarked on a thing, if we give it up, we only earn the title of cowards. When the people lose their manliness, the country as a whole grows poor in spirit. This struggle in Kheda is to secure suspension of land revenue. There is a very important idea behind it. That the Government is always in the right and the subjects are wrong: how can we tolerate this? The Government says that authority must be respected. Authority is blind and unjust. A Government that says that such authority must be respected cannot last. Under this British rule, we are taught from our childhood that theirs is a rule of justice. This is their ideal. It seems to me that, in place of this ideal, we have these days the rule of despotism. That is why I say that we should rise against this

[1] He was a teacher in Ganganath Vidyalaya, Baroda, and had joined Gandhiji in 1915; *vide* Vol. XIII, p. 106.

Government. I came over to Kheda district. When we investig: the state of the crops, you proved to me and my co-workers they have been less than four annas. If what you say is tru is the duty of the Government to concede our demand. And a all, what is it we have asked for? Merely that collection of l revenue be suspended for a year and that, if they announce suspension, those of us who have the means are ready to pay

If the Government does not concede even such a reason demand, what is the duty of the people? The scriptures, enjoin that, if a king goes wrong, the people should point out error to him. Authority is blind and cannot readily see its mistakes. In this case, the Government is violating truth doing injustice to the people, whereas we, speaking the truth, asking for justice. Truth ever prevails. You ought to have confidence that, if, for the sake of truth, we just abide by pledge, there is no Government which will ruin its subjects nothing.[1] I hear people say that they are in misery. But I l come here to tell you that, if we suffer voluntarily, we shall c through in the end. I have placed my trust in the peopl Kheda district. Some have gone back on their pledge; to that ex the responsibility of the rest of us has increased. If, of two or t carts one breaks down during a journey, the others will ha heavier load to carry. I want you to bring lustre to the n of Kheda, famous as it is. It is for you to fulfil my wish. day after tomorrow, you have been called by the Commissi to Nadiad. He wants to talk, not to those who have paid up land revenue, but to those specially who have not done so. T should go positively. Shed all fear, tell him of your pledge say what you want. The Commissioner will tell you that misleading you, that I have not advised you for your good. may perhaps say that I am a good man but that in this mat have gone wrong. But it was from you I collected the figures the crops turned out to have been four annas. That was the rect estimate and, therefore, you should corroborate it b Mr. Pratt. None of you need be awed by him. Our salvatio in clinging to truth. We are fighting for freedom.[2] I would

[1] *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18-4-1918, reports Gandhiji to have said "That would raise them in the eyes of the world. They bore no ill w wards Government; on the contrary they had great feelings for it."

[2] *The Bombay Chronicle* report here has: "Independence, fearlessness, these are virtues which we have to attain. They are dormant in our if we cannot awaken them in ourselves, then we are not men but brute fight to obtain manliness."

the women that they, too, must ask their husbands not to pay the Government's dues, whatever the suffering you may have to go through. If we stand by our pledge and uphold our honour, freedom is bound to follow. Do everything necessary to ensure this. To those who have paid up, my advice is that they should help the others to hold out.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

224. SPEECH AT SINHUJ

April 10, 1918

Before I say what I wish to, I should like to ask you how many of you have not paid the revenue.[1] On coming here I learn that many women have been intimidated by the Government's severity in this fight and that, in consequence, in the last two or three days, a large number have paid up the revenue. I am sorry for those who have done this out of fear and all the more so for such of them who might have taken a pledge and have yet paid up. There is wisdom in not taking a pledge, but a pledge once taken must be honoured. Some will say that this struggle is merely to secure suspension of the land revenue for a year. Yes, that is true enough; but, in reality, the struggle is for an all-important issue underlying the question of land revenue. We must become absolutely fearless. Fear is not for us, neither for men nor for women; fear is for beasts. The day before yesterday I said by way of illustration that, on seeing the frightened eyes of the bullock when a car passes by, I am moved to pity. As the car comes nearer, the bullock shakes with fear, and sometimes the car is in danger of being overturned. The bullock's fear is groundless. We are in the same condition as this bullock. It is a harsh comparison and does no credit to man, but that is the simple truth of the matter. Why should we fear without any reason? Neither the *Talati* nor the other officers hurt anyone, they simply cannot do so. Even the *ravanias* only put questions and walk away. They are rather scared, thinking that this is the people's day. On one side they are scared and, on the other, we are. What a situation!

Let the Government, if it will, take away our cattle; hand over the ornaments, too, if it wants to seize them. But there is one

[1] Most of those present raised their hands.

thing we will not give up and that is our self-respect. No one who does not maintain his self-respect can be called a man of religion. He who is afraid of God is afraid of none else. He whom we have imagined as omnipotent and omniscient protects all and leads all to welfare. How can you give in, betraying all those who, in this fight for truth and dharma, have bound themselves by a pledge? To the friends who took fright, I should say, "Stand up, if you have courage enough and patriotism in you, and assure the others who are firm in their pledge that you will stand by them and, if they have to part with their lands or cattle, you will share yours with them." Some of the women told me that, if I had come two days earlier, they would not have paid up. I should say to these ladies, "If you would be true to your word, you should tell your husbands to spend their money on the community." I told them in Borsad and Vasad, the day before yesterday, that a man who had yielded would feel like bringing down others and so, instead of admitting his weakness, would try to cover it up. If any of you harbours such an idea, please banish it from your mind and give courage to the satyagrahis who have taken the pledge. That is our sacred duty. If you discharge this duty, at any rate, those who have taken the pledge will stick to it unflinchingly. We want in this way to train and prepare the country, and show the right path to the Government which has chosen to disregard truth and justice; this is our aim in fighting. It is sheer injustice to confiscate land worth ten thousand rupees to recover ten rupees of revenue. If the Government wickedly perpetrates such monstrous injustice, I will go all out against it in the manner of an outlaw and advise you as well to do the same. I cannot imagine the Government acting in this way for the sake of five or ten rupees. These days, the Government rules by threats. It is a wrong notion that a Government can be run on the basis of fear. We should not fall a prey to such fear. We have faith in the justice of Nature. Do not obstruct the Government when it takes away your buffaloes nor hand over anything with your own hands. We have all these years been giving and obeying in fear, resentful inside. In the result, we have come to be utterly abject. Kheda yields crops of gold and its people are brave. Despite the famine of 1956[1], they have, toiling day and night, turned the land into a garden. How does it happen that the light has fled from their lands and their faces? The only reason is that the people have begun to be afraid

[1] Of the Vikram calendar, corresponding to the year 1900 of the Christain Era

of the Government. This fight is to emancipate ourselves from such a condition. The success of this satyagraha in Kheda will have repercussions all over India. Our salvation lies in our own hands. By our own efforts shall we end our suffering.

In this struggle, we shall learn another wonder-working idea, that we do not propose to fight with arms; we do not want to carry guns or spears; we shall fight with the weapon of truth. He who bears this weapon has need of no other. If, without harbouring any fear, we trust to truth and fight, we shall achieve a great success.

I hear that, in this satyagraha struggle against the Government, things are going on which are the opposite of truth. When the officer asks the farmers why they do not pay, instead of telling him that the crops have been less than four annas, they are afraid and make other excuses. We should not be rude to the *mamlatdar* or the Collector, though we need not submit to forced labour or give anything demanded as of right. Indeed, they can order nothing from us. On no account should we omit to extend to them common hospitality. We may not give them anything free, but give them what they want against its full price. We ought not to forget good manners. Yesterday, it was brought to my notice that people refuse things even against money. How can this be in a fight of the nature of satyagraha? I was pained at this. How may those who wish to be rid of tyranny tyrannize over others? A third thing. The Commissioner wants to address you and tell you something the day after tomorrow, at three o'clock, in the *mamlatdar*'s court in Nadiad. I would advise all of you to attend. They will even tell you that I am leading you astray. It is not for me to judge whether I am leading you well or ill; I tell you only what seems right to me. If it seems so to you as well, declare with one voice that, by following my advice, you command better respect and are able to safeguard your rights. Mr. Pratt will not be angry at this. He understands that, when the people are aggrieved, they have a right to complain. Satyagraha consists in seeking relief from hardships through voluntary suffering. Be fearless, all of you, and tell the Commissioner this : "Our lands, cattle or jewellery are not dearer to us than our plighted word, our self-respect or our dharma. Again and again we have pleaded with you and told you that our crops have been less than four annas. Under the law, if the crops are less than four annas, collection of land revenue has to be suspended. You took the *Talatis*' word and not ours. We have only one way open to us to convince you, and that is, not to pay the land revenue willingly." Go to the

meeting, all of you. Listen carefully to what the Commissioner says and, if permitted, have your say. Afterwards, come to the Hindu Anathashram. We shall talk there. The Government does not want anyone to be afraid. We have been waving the flag of swaraj. It is with our own efforts that we are to achieve it. We shall certainly get it if we become absolutely fearless. Whatever happens, do not pay the revenue. Let the women give courage to their husbands.[1] If anyone has a question to ask, he may have his doubts answered. The situation demands that you act with due thought and care.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

225. SPEECH TO SATYAGRAHIS OF VADOD[2]

April 11, 1918

As days pass, our ordeal grows severer. I am coming straight from Ahmedabad after a meeting with the Commissioner. We had a talk lasting an hour. He told me of the proposed public meeting in Nadiad. I assured him that the agriculturists would attend it. I hope all those who have not paid up the land revenue will go to the meeting and see what the Commissioner advises. He may tell you that, despite the failure of crops, it is the people's duty to pay the Government the land revenue. Maybe, he is right. On my part, I shall only tell you that you should remain loyal, till the very end, to the pledge you have taken. Tell him the whole story from the beginning to the end. If you take your pledge seriously, be firm and give him your side of the case : Why you have taken the pledge; whether you took it knowing full well what you were doing, and also what you hope to gain from it. Tell him all this plainly.

This is not a struggle merely to escape payment of the revenue this year. I have been saying this at every place. Through this struggle we want to bring home to the Government that it ought to yield to the people. No king can remain in power if he

[1] A report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18-4-1918, here has: "Give courage to your husbands, to your children, to your brethren, like women of old and make them firm in their vow."

[2] The meeting which was held at the Dharmashala in Vadod, a village in the Anand Taluka, was attended by people from the surrounding villages.

sets himself against the people. I have taken it as the chief mission of my life to prove this. Our people have lost their spirit. Their wealth has been drained away. There is no light in their eyes.[1] There is a comparison which comes to my mind again and again. Government is to the subjects what a car approaching a bullock is to the latter, be it the British Government or a native State. As the car comes on, tears gather in the bullock's eyes and he begins to sweat; in the same way, the people shake with fear of the authority of their Government. I cannot bear to see this. You should be able to tell the Government that it may grant relief under its own law. If you can bring it to do this, you will have some life in you in place of this abjectness of yours.

In the morning we repeat the names of innumerable *rishis* and *satis*. We chant the names of Sita and Rama, Nala and Damayaanti, Prahlad and so on. And for what? To get inspiration from their lives. The scriptures say that those human beings who pass their lives as beasts will be born as beasts in their next lives. You went to the Collector, you went to the Commissioner and then to the Bombay Government and gave up the effort at last when you failed everywhere. If that is the truth, I must say that to submit in this helpless fashion is to behave in the manner of a beast. We may find our happiness either in killing or being killed. The first way is that of beasts, the second that of man. The soul of a beast is ever asleep, a man's ever awake. We can never prosper till we are fully grown and awake in our souls.[2] I shall tell you a story from the Puranas. There was a certain *rishi;* the fire emitted from between his brows put an end to all suffering. The point of this text is that, when the soul becomes alive, all miseries end and so the injustices perpetrated by the Government will be no more when we become alive in our soul. I want to put this truth to you in the plainest terms. We want happiness in place of the present misery; if so, we should suffer voluntarily and lay down our lives for the sake of truth. He who knows the power of truth and has realized it in his being is ever happy. I may lose my all, but none can deprive me of the joy in

[1] Reports in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16-4-1918, and *New India*, 17-4-1918, have Gandhiji saying here: "The nation is emasculated, and there is no way out of it but that of keeping fast to our anchor while we are passing through a supreme ordeal."

[2] Reports in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *New India* add here: ". . . only by treading down brute force and planting soul-force in its stead was the eternal wakefulness of the soul and consequently our salvation possible."

my soul. I want you to know that joy. We need to become religious-minded. We must learn to speak the truth and walk in the way of truth. The *ravanias* are welcome to come every day and bring orders of attachment. I would tell you, out of regard for your pledge, let them dispossess you of all you have; be as fakirs but do not budge an inch. This is the dharma for a man. I assure the women that we shall not starve. What we lose today we shall get back tomorrow; but, once our pledge is violated, it is violated for ever. We should preserve our good name and our pledge, our dignity and manliness. This is the legacy we should leave to posterity. May God give you strength, and may you make your name ever so glorious! Those friends who have taken the pledge may please reassure us. Let me have it from you that the universe may go to pieces and the sun may fail to rise, but you will not go back on your pledge.[1]

Say : "You may cut off our heads if you please, but we will not pay the land revenue. We shall not submit to the Government's injustice. If, however, you will be kind enough to remit the land revenue and see that the poor people don't suffer, those of us who can afford will pay up."

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

[1] What follows is Gandhiji's answer to a question what the farmers should say at the Commissioner's meeting.

226. LETTER TO PATRICK GEDDES[1]

[NADIAD,]
April 12, 1918

DEAR PROF. GEDDES[2],

I am truly thankful to you for your very kind letter.

You would not be more pained than I am over our base imitation of the West. I want a great deal from you but nothing indiscriminately. I take part in the spectacles such as the one at Indore[3] in order that I may reach and touch the hearts of the people and wean them from materialism as much as possible. There is a materialistic view of the vernacular question and the religions. I am endeavouring to place the latter before them. The success of

[1] This was sent in reply to Geddes' letter, the main points of which were as follows, as recorded by Mahadev Desai: (1) It (Conference) was really perfectly English, with the succession of decorous speeches, by the proper persons, in the proper tone and with the proper conviction. (2) No great public conference has yet given English a thought, yet at Stratford-on-Avon they play Shakespeare. Your theatres were silent. No sign of Tulsidas. (3) Why not take examples and methods from the West—like the Welsh "Eisteddfod"?—at the one before last I heard Lloyd George in his utmost vigour, his most flavouring mood, since tensely in his own vernacular—He said, "I have come here to *sing*." (4) Their pandal was divided into groups of each quality of voice for collective song. (5) The Irish, reviving their language, may give you hints, e.g., establishment of small vacation gatherings. (6) Look to Provence—a great folk poet—Mistral. They do him honour, they reopened the ancient Græco-Roman theatres of their region and brought from . . . Sarah Bernhardt and her company not simply to do their plays but to start their own acting at the highest level, and when the Swedes gave old Mistral the Nobel Prize, he built the Musee Provencal—no mere glass case museum. (7) In Denmark a Bishop and a layman laid their heads together and set about re-educating the youths and maidens not with the 3 R's but with plough and cow and tale and song. (8) You want for your meetings no mere transient pandal with its poor accoustics, but the open air theatre and amphitheatre where the Greeks perfected their language and literature. (9) Support strongly the plea of uniting Hindi and Urdu. It is very much like the union of the Saxon and the French vocabulary. English theme gained the best qualities of each—the homely directness and force of the Germanic languages yet gained a new precision, new dignity from the clerical side. Might not therefore the union of Urdu and Hindi be worked up by the institution of essays and prize poems for next conference?"

[2] He was at the time Director, Bombay School of Economics.

[3] The reference is to the Hindi Literary Conference held on March 29-31 over which Gandhiji presided.

the Conference is to be measured by the extent to which I have been able to touch the religions in [the] audience before me.

I tried last year to do away with the pandal for the Congress and suggested a meeting on the Maidan early in the morning. That is the Indian style and it is the best. I wonder if the amphitheatre is an improvement. My ideal is speaking to the crowd from under a tree. Never mind if the voice does not reach the thousands, nay millions. They come not to hear but to see. And they see far more than we can imagine. Amphitheatres suggest a limitation to the space capacity. The merit lies in an unlimited number being able to come and yet doing their work in an orderly manner. Such were the annual fairs of old. We have but to introduce religion into the new social and political life and you have a perfect organization in working order to fall back upon.

But what is the use of my writing? Both of us are preoccupied. The wretched fever of the West has taken possession of us. We have no leisure for things eternal. The utmost that can be said of us is that we do hanker after the eternal though our activity may belie our profession.

I shall treasure your letter. May I make public use of it?

And do please tell me how I may build cheap and durable houses—from the foundation to the roof.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

227. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
April 12, 1918

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have your letter. I also wrote one to you, which you must have received. You have said nothing about your health. I am greatly pleased to learn that you have been attending on nursing the sister. We read in our holy books that pupils used to volunteer their services to their teachers. Your way of putting the thing is as natural and sweet as in those books. I do not know how to measure the height to which this service will raise you.

It is quite easy to understand why I did not ask for 35 per cent [increase] for more than one day. It was impossible for me to stretch the matter any further. The employers even now think

that they agreed to give so much not because of any firmness on the workers' part but on account of my fast. I would have been guilty of a kind of violence if I had asked for more. In accepting the minimum when I was in a position to ask for more, I showed straightforwardness, modesty and good sense. Had I not fasted, it is certain that the workers would have yielded. They kept firm because of the fast. A pledge so kept [by the workers] can justify only a demand placed at the lowest. We can have it respected merely in the letter. This one was so respected and, because I placed the demand at the minimum, I made up in a way, indeed in great measure, for the flaws which had tainted my fast. Esther understood the significance of the fast very clearly. She wired me a sentence from the Bible. It means :

> Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.[1]

I look upon that fast as the best thing I have done so far. The peace which I knew at the time of that fast was no mere human experience.

I do not get here the joy which I found in my work at Ahmedabad. I feel uneasy in mind and keep thinking of all manner of things. Sometimes, I feel people have understood the idea all right; at other times, I fancy that they have not understood it and so feel pained. To be sure, excellent work is being done, but now the mind is fatigued. It is a crushing burden I carry, that of the fight for Mahomed Ali. I have no choice but to bear it. I cherish the hope that God will give me the strength for it and, because of that hope, I am calm in the inmost depths of my heart. Ba is with me.

Tell Chhotalal that his pen appears to have grown stale again. Let me have more details about the progress in weaving.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

228. LETTER TO SHIVDAS AND POPATLAL

NADIAD,
Chaitra Sud 1 [*April 12, 1918*]

DEAR SHRI SHIVDAS[1],

I got both your letter and postcard. I have written to them to send you Rs. 10/-. Let me know if you find that this is not enough. Maintain a diary. Is the plague still raging there?

BHAI POPATLAL[2],

I read your lines. I have not lost my faith in you. Let me know what you have been doing and the state of your eyes; I shall then entrust you with some work you can do there.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

The earlier Motilal's[3] family comes over here, the better.

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 2857

229. LETTER TO BALVANTRAI THAKORE

[NADIAD,]
April 12, 1918

BHAISHRI BALWANTRAIJI,

I have your letter. It bespeaks your love for me. I am grateful. I have already written to Natarajan that he has been hasty in forming the opinion he has done.[4] Instead of dealing with your arguments, I would rather explain what I mean by "satyagraha". Although I use the phrase "passive resistance", it does not fully connote what I have in mind. Please forget all about it. I apply to political matters the same law which regulates our conduct in the family. In India, I find that people act under the shadow of

[1] Shivdas Chaturbhuj Parikh, later known as Swami Shivanand, a public worker of Kathiawad

[2] A constructive worker of Saurashtra

[3] A public worker of Wadhwan in Saurashtra who first approached Gandhiji regarding the Customs Cordon at Viramgam; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. III.

[4] *Vide* "Letter to K. Natarajan", before 5-4-1918.

fear, do not tell the truth out of fear, deceiving themselves and the Government. The juniormost police officer can ruin the reputation of a big man of wealth. I think it is the duty of every leader to get out of this state of mind. The officers are not amenable to the public. They think their actions are divinely inspired and cannot conceivably be opposed. It will be a service to them, and therefore to the State, to help them get rid of this notion. Wherever, therefore, I find people submitting to injustice out of fear, I tell them that, to shake off imposed hardships, they must suffer voluntarily. This is satyagraha. To make others suffer in order to save ourselves from suffering is *duragraha*, brute force. When a bullock is hurt, he kicks. When a man is oppressed, he should employ soul force to fight himself free, suffering voluntarily to that end.

This is not the first time that hell has been let loose on the people of Kheda district. In the past too they have suffered much. Even the womenfolk of that place tell my wife of it. This time, they spoke out against the hardship of having to pay the land revenue. If they pay up, it will be done not willingly but through fear. For doing so, many of them will have to part with their cattle or have their valuable trees cut down. How can one bear to see this suffering? I have seen it with my own eyes. What is the way out? Should I send petitions? I did. Natarajan says that we should approach the Viceroy or proceed to England. What relief will this bring to the ryots? The trees will have been cut down meanwhile and the dues paid. What will be the point of agitating thereafter? Let it be understood that the struggle is not for amendment of the law but against the manner of its administration. What is the use of an appeal after a convict is hanged? Many an innocent person has been so hanged and all that through our indifference. We had only two courses open to us. Either resist the tax collector by force or tell him in all civility that we would not pay the tax. "He will recover it, all the same; in what way will you have saved the people, then?" Surely, you will not put this question? If you do, I have given my reply in the very beginning.

It happens, incidentally, that in this struggle the people are being educated about religion, right conduct, unity, truth and non-violence and the Government to respect public opinion. There is no room for hatred at all. We have no desire to seek relief by bringing pressure on the Government, but by awakening its sense of justice. The outcome will in every case be good. In the end, people will have but grown stronger in spirit. What will it matter even if, being weak, the people surrender? Self-suffering never goes in vain.

If they fall, they will fall to rise again.
No step along this path is ever wasted,
No obstacle undoes the progress made;
Even a little of this dharma
Saves one from great danger.[1]

You may write again if there is anything yet which troubles you.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

230. SPEECH AT NADIAD

April 12, 1918

The friends here have come after doing an important piece of work. They told the Commissioner boldly what it was necessary that he should be told. That to my mind is our victory. The aim behind this struggle is to cultivate enough courage to be able to speak to the officers as to friends and equals, and get our demand conceded by the Government. The fact that the Commissioner spoke in a friendly and courteous manner should itself be regarded as our victory. A victory is all the more a victory for our having clung to justice and truth through all suffering. The Commissioner had told me, very courteously though, that the Government would confiscate lands and I had replied with equal courtesy and gentleness that it was welcome to do so but that it would not find the business profitable.

In case of a difference between the Government and the people, the principle of *panch*[2] must be accepted. We are fighting for this principle. Considering the matter from the point of view of dharma, it is obligatory to have recourse to a *panch*. The relationship of the Government and its subjects is that of father and son, not of master and slave. It is the duty of a son to resist injustice on the part of his father.

To those who have taken the pledge, it is my advice that they stick to it to the very end. I shall fight on as long as they do not return to you the lands which have been confiscated. I shall not

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 40
[2] Literally, "the five"; here an arbitrator

give up the struggle while I live. Only, you must also join it. If you are prepared to suffer, not minding confiscation of your lands, I am with you. Harishchandra suffered in all sorts of ways, got himself sold to a low-caste family and lost everything, but he clung to truth. It is my hope that all of you will be such Harishchandras. It is my unshakable belief that to follow dharma is to live it. Chanting of devotional songs and prayers does not amount to following dharma. One must have unwavering faith in God. We have thus to cultivate knowledge of the self, that is, knowledge of the powers of the soul.

Mr. Pratt has described me as a sannyasi. He was both right and wrong. I do not claim to be a sannyasi. I am as liable to err as you; the difference is this, that I desire to be a sannyasi and constantly strive to be one. It is my firm conviction that political problems can be solved through satyagraha. That our struggle has brought about a change in Mr. Pratt's attitude—this is soul-force.

To lose one's land in the fight is nothing very great. It is a householder, not a sannyasi, who is in a position to sacrifice land. They are not sannyasis in Europe who are shedding rivers of blood; they are but householders. Mr. Lloyd George, running all over the place, himself and his possessions at the disposal of the country, is he a sannyasi? Is the war which England is fighting one for land? Surely not. Why, she felt, should Germany be allowed to have her way? Germany, too, on her part, is fighting for her self-respect. She wants to vindicate herself. We have been assured by some others that we shall not starve. The only assurance the people of Europe have is the strength of their arms. They see so many of their sons dying every second, but they don't shed tears over them. You will have your lands back with honour in this struggle. If you put up with the loss of your lands, sacrificing your very souls in doing so, you will earn a name for yourselves not only in Kheda district but in the whole of India.

Finally, I have only this to tell you : whatever the cost, honour the pledge you have taken with God as witness and with full knowledge and understanding. And have faith, not in me, but in God.

What does it matter even if you lose your lands? We shall earn greater respect and fame by doing so. The Government will also take pride in ruling over such a brave people.

I once told Mr. Pratt that theirs was a rule of fear and terror and that, if they were to rule, instead, with love and due respect for the people, their rule would last for ever. I have told you

again and again, and do so emphatically even here, that, if you honour your pledge at all costs, victory is assuredly yours.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

231. LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY

NADIAD,
April 14, 1918

The above[1] was drafted, as you will observe, on the 10th instant. I have slept over it all these nights. I feel that I can best serve the State by being respectfully frank. During the last four days, the war has taken a graver turn. That strengthens me in my resolve to send the letter. In all humility I ask Lord Chelmsford not only to release the brothers but take them in his counsel, as also Mr. Tilak. They are *not* enemies of the State. Without their help you will not have a contented India.

N. A. I.: Home: Political—A: June 1918, No. 360

232. LETTER TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"[2]

NADIAD,
April 15, 1918

TO
THE EDITOR
THE CHRONICLE
BOMBAY

SIR,

The publication of the summary of the Commissioner's Gujarati address to the Kaira cultivators[3] necessitates a reply in justice to the latter as also the workers.

[1] The reference is to the letter dated April 10, which was sent with this covering note.

[2] The letter seems to have been released to the Press generally. It was also published in *Young India*, 17-4-1918.

[3] Some 2,000 of the principal agriculturists of the district had gathered at a meeting in Ahmedabad, convened with Gandhiji's assistance, on April 12. It was attended by the Collector and other revenue officials. Gandhiji deputed Vallabhbhai Patel to the meeting, but later found it necessary to speak in order to clear up a misunderstanding created by the Commissioner's speech. For the text of this address, *vide* Appendix XIII.

I have before me a verbatim report of the speech. It is more direct than the summary in the laying down of the Government policy. The Commissioner's position is that the revenue authorities' decision regarding suspension is final. They may and do receive and hear complaints from the ryots, but the finality of their decision cannot be questioned. This is the crux of the struggle. It is contended on behalf of the ryots that, where there are, in matters of administrative orders, sharp differences of opinion between local officials and them, the points of differences are and ought to be referred to an impartial committee of inquiry. This, it is held, constitutes the strengh of the British Constitution. The Commissioner has on principle rejected this position and invited a crisis. And he has made such a fetish of it that he armed himself beforehand with a letter from Lord Willingdon to the effect that even he should not interfere with the Commissioner's decision. He brings in the War to defend his position and adjures the ryots and me to desist from our cause at this time of peril to the Empire. But I venture to suggest that the Commissioner's attitude constitutes a peril far graver than the German peril, and I am serving the Empire in trying to deliver it from this peril from within. There is no mistaking the fact that India is waking up from its long sleep. The ryots do not need to be literate to appreciate their rights and their duties. They have but to realize their invulnerable power and no Government, however strong, can stand against their will. The Kaira ryots are solving an Imperial problem of the first magnitude in India. They will show that it is impossible to govern men without their consent. Once the Civil Service realizes this position, it will supply to India truly *Civil Servants* who will be the bulwark of the people's rights. Today the Civil Service rule is a rule of fear. The Kaira ryot is fighting for the rule of love. It is the Commissioner who has produced the crisis. It was, as it is now, his duty to placate the people when he saw that they held a different view. The revenue of India will be no more in danger because a Commissioner yields to the popular demands and grants concessions than the administration of justice was in danger, when Mrs. Maybrick was reprieved purely in obedience to the popular will, or the Empire was in danger because a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was replaced in obedience to the same demand. Had I hesitated to advise the people to stand against the Commissioner's refusal to listen to their prayer, instead of taking the open and healthy course it has taken, their discontent would have burrowed under and bred ill will. That son is a true son of his father, who rather than harbour ill will against him,

frankly but respectfully tells him all he feels and equally respectful resists him, if he cannot truthfully obey his commands. I app the same law to the relations between the Government and tl people. There cannot be seasons when a man must suspend h conscience. But just as a wise father will quickly agree with h son and not incur his ill-will, especially if the family was in dang from without, even so a wise Government will quickly agree wit the ryots, rather than incur their displeasure. War cannot b permitted to give a licence to the officials to exact obedience t their orders, even though the ryots may consider them to be un reasonable and unjust.

The Commissioner steels the hearts of the ryots for continuin their course by telling them that for a revenue of four lakhs c rupees, he will for ever confiscate his hundred and fifty thou sand acres of land worth over 3 crores of rupees, and for ever de clare the holders, their wives and children unworthy of holdin any lands in Kaira. He considers the ryots to be misguided an contumacious in the same breath. These are solemn words :

> Do not be under the impression that our *mamlatdars* and our *Talat* will realize the assessment by attaching and selling your movable pro perty. We are not going to trouble ourselves so much. Our officer time is valuable. Only by your bringing in the monies shall the trea suries be filled. This is no threat. You take it from me that parent never threaten their children. They only advise. But if you do not pa the dues, your lands will be confiscated. Many people say that thi will not happen. But I say it will. I have no need to take a vow I shall prove that I mean what I say. The lands of those who do no pay will be confiscated. Those who are contumacious will get no land in future. Govenment do not want their names on their Records c Ryots. Those who go out shall never be admitted again.

I hold that it is the sacred duty of every loyal citizen to figh unto death against such a spirit of vindictiveness and tyranny The Commissioner has done the Ahmedabad strikers and me a cruel wrong in saying that the strikers knowingly broke their vow. He was present at the meeting where the settlement was declared. He may hold that the strikers had broken their vow (though his speech at the meeting produced a contrary impression) but there is nothing to show that the strikers knowingly broke their vow. On the contrary, it was entirely kept by their re-suming their work on their getting for the first day wages demanded by them, and the final decision as to wages being referred to arbi-tration. The strikers had suggested arbitration which the mill-owners had rejected.

Their struggle in its essence was for a 35% increase in their wages or such increase as an arbitration board may decide. And this is what they have got. The hit at the strikers and me is, I regret to have to say, a hit below the belt.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-4-1918

233. LETTER TO RESIDENTS OF NAYAKA[1]

April 16, 1918

I have just heard that the lands of twenty-five of you have been confiscated. If this is true, I congratulate you on your being the first. I believe the lands will stand confiscated only on paper. However, as you have taken the vow to bear every kind of suffering, I need say nothing to console you. I offer you only congratulations.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

234. SPEECH AT OD

April 16, 1918

If a person whose name we chance to mention appears unexpectedly at the spot, we usually say that he will live to be a hundred years. Thus has it happened here. The moment we thought of Vallabhbhai, we sighted him coming this way. I had hoped to meet you last week, but I could not come here as I had to go to Bombay, and was then at Ahmedabad to see Mr. Pratt. Before I acquaint you with the talks I have had with the top officers whom I met in Bombay, let me tell you what I heard about you in Nadiad. I was told that the people of Od are quite spirited but that they have, till now, used their courage and strength, not for their good, but in quarrelling and wrangling among themselves. And so it happens that this soil of Kheda, fertile and lovely, which your forefathers had transformed into a land of gold, has been ruined while you have been stubbornly fighting for your

[1] A translation of this appeared also in *New India*, 23-4-1918.

claims against one another.[1] We shall not succeed in a strugg of any kind so long as this state of affairs continues. You hav taken the pledge to carry on our struggle to the bitter end an secure justice. I can assure you that, if we could forget our pa enmities and live together harmoniously, success is ours.

Mr. Pratt, Mr. Carmichael and [Sir James] Duboulay shoo heads and strongly disapproved of our struggle. During the cours of our talks, they remarked : "You do not know the people c Kheda. We do not agree that this struggle will result in thei progress and uplift or raise them morally. Rather, it will teac them to be defiant." I am telling you what opinion the to officials of the Revenue Department hold about you. I the struggle you have embarked upon, you must maintain th utmost truthfulness, not partial. When Prahlad was askec "Where is your God Vishnu?", he replied: "On land and in watei in the sky and in the nether regions; I see the Almighty Vishnı wherever I look." In the same way, only if we find truth al round us may we call this struggle satyagraha. We cannot hav one set of manners in public and another in private. Truth is all pervasive as the Essence that we know as Vishnu. Just as w cannot say that Vishnu is non-existent in a certain place, so als we cannot say that truth exists at one place but not at some other

As you all belong to the same village and the same commu nity and follow the same profession, you must learn to apologiz to one another [for your errors] and live harmoniously. Anyon who says that satyagraha may be used only against the Govern ment has not understood the meaning of satyagraha at all. We do not want to fight the Government with threats and arrogan defiance; we want to fight it by submitting ourselves voluntarily to suffering. Those who suffer with understanding and know ledge to end suffering always succeed. This is the only way for you if you wish to win in this struggle. In Nayaka, notices of confiscation were issued to twenty-five farmers and their lands were confiscated. I wrote a letter[2] to congratulate these brave friends when I heard of this. I told them that the confiscation would remain only in the Government records. All the same, I said, their pledge was that they would remain adamant even if their

[1] *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20-4-1918, reports Gandhiji as having said: "For years you have been exhausting your energy and fearlessness in fighting each other. For once, rise and be united and use the same strong elements to fight the 'fear of *Sirkar*', the common enemy."

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

lands were confiscated, that there was no need to cheer up satyagrahis. They should have nothing but congratulations. This being an occasion for rejoicing, I sent them congratulations, not consolations. I appeal to you also to welcome gladly orders of confiscation. I cannot even dream that the Government will ever be able to confiscate our lands. That is impossible under British rule. Should the impossible become possible, I shall have no way open to me but to make myself an outlaw against the British Government,which boils down to this, that the lands will not really be confiscated. You have committed no crime in taking the pledge; on the contrary, by doing so, you have averred your loyalty to the State. The crops having been less than four annas, we appealed for suspension of the collection of land revenue as provided in their law, made petitions, held meetings to ask for some relief and our representatives in the legislature tried all remedies provided in law. The Government turned a deaf ear to all this. What, then, should a brave, manly and loyal people do under the circumstances? The right relation between the Government and the people is that, in case of difference between the two, the former should always bow to popular opinion.

We do not demand that the Government should accept what we say and yield. We ask that, if our case is proved, justice be done to us. We asked for the appointment of arbitrators, but the Government turned down even that request. Mr. Pratt believes that the people should have no say in the matter. We have been victims of this policy for the last fifty years; we have become impoverished through fear. We have not money enough for repairs to our houses. Our crops grow poorer. How can God look kindly on us either, so long as we remain such cowards? Even the rains are regular where the king and his subjects are truthful in their dealings. The two sides are at odds, each holding to its own view as a matter of prestige. The people insist on their view of the matter being right and the Government on its. We argue that the people are speaking the truth and yet there is no relief. This struggle will show what the Government should do in case of difference between it and the people. All India has its eyes upon you. Have courage and hold out; don't prove yourselves cowards. It is prudence not to embark upon a venture but, having once done so, it is not for a brave man to give it up.

I have been told to beware of *Patidars* and the people of Gujarat in general. But I look upon all as being no better or worse than I am. All have the same *atman* and are equal in their powers. We can have the *atman* grow as we will. . . . Such is my experience.

This is to your good and will secure you relief. I hope, therefor that you will hold on. The *Patidars* are a venturesome communit they are Kshatriyas. They know that their lands are theirs and s it is natural that they should be proud of them. They should nc go back on their plighted word, should not betray their Kshatriy blood but fight on to the last and compel the Government to bo to public opinion. If they can do this, swaraj is in the hollow c our palms. Swaraj consists in knowing our rights and our dutie Mr. Montagu may come over from England and grant us seemingl big rights, but they will avail us nothing unless we grow consciou of our rights and obligations. This requires some education an training. I should think you have some elementary knowledg and understanding of these matters. I know likewise that you hav taken the pledge in this struggle after full deliberation. You mus abide by it with an intelligent understanding of its spirit. Malic has no place in this struggle; nor the sword, nor the *dhariya*[1]. Ou sole weapon is to abide by truth, and our arms are faith and cour age. Satyagraha knows no defeat. To be sure, we shall suffe defeat if we value our lands more than our self-respect. I am con fident that my faith in the people of Kheda will not prove to hav been misplaced. I pray you will give a good fight to the Govern ment and bring glory to the name of Kheda.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

235. PREFACE TO "ANTYAJ STOTRA"

NADIAD

Chaitra Sud 7, 1974 [April 17, 1918

The most striking instance of the terrible excesses of Hinduism is our treatment of the *Antyajas*. How degrading and shameful it is, Shri Amritlal Padhiar has set out vividly in his *Antyaj Stotra*. There is some exaggeration in it, thanks to the poet in him, but it is slight. Shri Padhiar has given a heart-rending picture which cannot but fill the reader with horror to the very roots of his being. He has poured forth his indignation in the *stotra*. It should be read out to men and women in their millions, in the same way that works like the *Bhagavat* are read out to them in every square.

[1] A curved, sickle-like blade fixed to a long stick

Till we have rid ourselves of this taint of untouchability, the big question will remain whether we have become fit for swaraj. If slave-owners can be said to be fit, then perhaps we are. Let it not be forgotten that we are ourselves under subjection at present. Those who desire to be free from this state should all the more pay attention to their own evils. The little, mole-like faults of those who have fallen on evil times seem to others as huge as the Himalayas. Something of this kind has happened about our conduct towards the *Antyajas*; what is more to the point, the evil itself is a Himalayan one and hence it obstructs our progress. I have studied, with care and in a spirit of humility, the controversy which has followed in the wake of the *Antyaj* Conference at Godhra.[1] I have not come across a single convincing reason justifying the practice of untouchability. Where the scriptures themselves are under attack, to quote from them is like the blind man denying the existence of what he does not see. If we cannot defend our conduct by reason, the authority of scriptures is o no avail. They cannot be above reason and morality. If these latter are given the go-by any fraud can be justified in the name of religion.

We shall have to make such a sustained effort to purge ourselves of this terrible sin that, as Shri Padhiar points out, the effort will by itself raise us very high. If we make it in our traditional manner, we shall have achieved our aim while advancing in the path of dharma; if we follow the method they do in the West, a gulf will be created between us and the *Antyajas*.

It is cowardly for anyone to suggest that the *Antyajas* will be emancipated when the old generation has passed away. Our worth as men consists in doing *tapascharya* and awakening in our elders compassion and the purest sense of dharma. That and nothing less is our duty. If we boldly translate our words into action, the task can be accomplished quite soon. It is a mean desire to wish to kill an enemy so that one may rule over his kingdom afterwards; dharma consists in winning him over to our way of thinking and converting him into a friend. Shri Padhiar will have to shake off his cowardice.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Antyaj Stotra

[1] *Vide* "A Stain on India's Forehead", after 5-11-1917.

236. MESSAGE TO SATYAGRAHI AGRICULTURISTS[1]

NADIAD
April 17, 191

You did well to listen to Mr. Pratt attentively and courageously That is the right way for satyagrahis. We have had to disobey the orders of the Government about revenue, but we should no fail in the courtesy due to Government officers. We want freedom from fear and slavery, but have no desire to forget our manners. Rude, of course, we can never be. In satyagraha, one should always show due courtesy.

The Commissioner pointed out the rights as also the dutie of agriculturists and his advice in regard to both was worthy enough but the gentleman failed to say that every human being has one fundamental right and obligation. A man owes it as a duty to refuse to do anything out of fear and, therefore, when anyone hold out a threat in order to force him to do something, he has a righ to resist. By virtue of this right, the people of Kheda are at presen respectfully disobeying the Government's order. We believe tha the crops this year have been less than four annas and that, accordingly, the collection of Government dues should be suspended If, therefore, we pay the assessment which ought to have been suspended, we shall be doing so only out of fear that our movable property or our lands might be confiscated. If we give way to thi fear, we shall become incapable of any manly effort. About eighty per cent of the farmers have paid up the dues out of this fear and therefore, it is for the remaining twenty per cent to redeem the honour of all. Anyone who has lost his manliness cannot even show true loyalty. The difference between animals and man lie only in the latter's manliness. This is a fight for asserting ou manliness.

If the orders of the Revenue Department or any other Government orders are not revised despite petitions, it is not the spirit o the British Constitution that they must be obeyed meekly. Ther is no such political doctrine. It is the birth-right and the duty o the people to disobey orders which, on mature consideration, the

[1] Gandhiji dealt with Commissioner Pratt's speech in his letter to the Pres dated April 15. According to Mahadev Desai, Gandhiji issued this as a pamphle to elaborate the points he had made in his speech at Nadiad on April 12.

regard as unjust or oppressive. The rule which obtains in the affairs of a family is equally applicable to the relations of a Government and its subjects and a violation of this rule leads to a conflict between the two : the subjects turn disloyal in secret and the Government ceases to trust anyone and becomes suspicious. In disobeying an order of the Government, one thing must be remembered. We cannot claim with certainty that the order in question is unjust; though we may think it so, it may in fact be just. Therefore, as in private dealings, so a difference between a Government and its subjects should be settled through a *panch*. This is what our ancient kings used to do. The British Government always does so. Such a *panch* is called a 'commission' or 'committee' and in order to save the prestige of the Government the recommendations of the *panch* are not made enforceable through a court but are left to the discretion of the former. The ultimate result, though, is the same as in arbitration of the usual kind. Government cannot be carried on without taking into account public opinion. What should be done, then, if the Government refuses to appoint a committee or commission? A people amongst whom brute force is the sole arbiter resorts to violence and seeks justice with arms. My own experience is that this method is futile. I believe also that the scriptures of all religions have denounced this manner of obtaining justice through violence and we certainly do not employ it in our domestic affairs. The straightforward course is to disobey the order and submit patiently and without anger to the consequent suffering. This will serve many purposes. *If it turns out that we were in the wrong, the suffering we may have gone through would be justified; if we are right, the other party, that is, the Government, cannot remain unmoved* and ultimately it will have no option but to do justice. This is vouched for by the scriptures; they assert truth to be ever victorious; and time and again we find it is. The people of Kheda have come forward to suffer in this manner for the sake of truth, of dharma.

Lest we should become weak, we have bound ourselves by a pledge. No people can ever rise without doing this. *A pledge means unshakable resolution. The undecided man is swept from this side to that like a rudderless boat, and finally destroyed.* The Commissioner says that the pledge itself was improper and taken without thought. That it was not improper, we saw earlier, inasmuch as we have the right to disobey what we believe to be an unjust order; and that it was not taken thoughtlessly, everyone who took it knows. The course of the sun may alter, but this pledge, just and taken after full deliberation, shall not be abandoned.

I am sorry that Mr. Pratt has misrepresented the facts in hi reference to the mill-hands' strike in Ahmedabad and has violate the dictates of courtesy, justice, propriety and friendship. I hop that he has done so inadvertently. If any people in this worl have honoured their pledge, the mill-workers of Ahmedabad have They had always maintained that they would be prepared to accep any wage that the arbitrators fixed. It was because, at the tim of the strike, the mill-owners repudiated this principle that the mill hands demanded thirty-five per cent. Even afterwards, they di not refuse arbitration. They secured thirty-five per cent for th first day and so kept the letter of the pledge. To decide what the should get afterwards, an arbitrator was appointed and the worke agreed to accept whatever he awarded. Pending the awar the wages were fixed at between twenty per cent as offered by th mill-owners and thirty-five per cent as demanded by th workers. Even for this intervening period, adjustments were to b made subsequently in accordance with the arbitrators' awar Thus the spirit of the pledge was kept. However that may b the mill-hands certainly did not deliberately abandon their pledg as alleged by Mr. Pratt. He is free to believe that they did; l is his own master. What is material is how the matter appeared the workers, and this has been misrepresented by Mr. Pratt. F was present when the terms of the agreement were being explaine to the mill-hands. It was shown to them how the pledge cou be considered to have been kept and the agreement was readi welcomed by the workers. The gentleman was a witness to all th Speaking on the agreement, he said :

> I am happy that the two parties have arrived at a settl ment. So long as you seek and follow Mr. Gandhi's advi I am sure, you will succeed in improving your lot and securi justice. You must bear it in mind that Mr. Gandhi and t ladies and gentlemen who helped him have suffered a gre deal for you, have put themselves to trouble and shown th love for you.

With what little intelligence I have, I fail to understand ho despite this, he talks of the pledge having been given the go-l

The Commissioner uttered many threats and even said tl he would carry them out. That means that he will confiscate t lands of all those who have taken this pledge and will even del their heirs from owning lands in Kheda district.

This is a very fearful, cruel and heartless threat. I believe issues from intense anger. When the anger has subsided, he v

feel sorry for having uttered such a cruel threat. He holds the relationship between the Government and the people to be the same as between parents and children. There is no instance in the whole history of the world of parents having disinherited their children for having resisted them in a non-violent manner. The pledge you have taken may be a mistaken one—that is not inconceivable—but there is not even a trace of discourtesy or insolence or defiance in it. It is still inconceivable to me how punishment of this serious nature could be meted out for taking a pledge in a more or less religious spirit for one's own uplift. India cannot tolerate such punishment nor will the British statesmen ever uphold it. The British public would be horrified at it. If such fearful injustice should be perpetrated in the British Empire, I can live in it only as an outlaw. But I have far greater faith in British statesmanship than the Commissioner has. And I will repeat, what I said to you before, that I consider it impossible that you should lose your lands for anything done with such pure motives as yours. Nevertheless, we too must be ready to lose our lands. On the one hand, there is your pledge and, on the other, there is your property. All that property—both movable and immovable—is as nothing compared to your pledge. Your honouring the pledge will be a far more valuable legacy for your posterity than property worth lakhs of rupees. This is a way by following which the whole of India can raise itself and I am sure you will never abandon it. I pray to God that He may give you the strength to keep the pledge.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

237. INSTRUCTIONS TO VOLUNTEERS

SATYAGRAHA CAMI
NADIAI
April 17, 19l

1. The volunteers must remember that, as this is a satyagral campaign, they must abide by truth under all circumstances.
2. In satyagraha, there can be no room for rancour; which mea that a satyagrahi should utter no harsh word about anyone, fro a *ravania* to the Governor himself; if someone does so, it is tl volunteer's duty to stop him.
3. Rudeness has no place in satyagraha. Perfect courtesy mu be shown even to those who may look upon us as their enemi and the villagers must be taught to do the same. Rudeness m harm our cause and the struggle may be unduly prolonged. T volunteers should give the most serious attention to this matt and think out in their minds as many examples as possible of t advantages accruing from courtesy and the disadvantages resulti from rudeness and explain them to the people.
4. The volunteers must remember that this is a holy war. V embarked upon it because, had we not, we would have failed our dharma. And so all the rules which are essential for livi a religious life must be observed here too.
5. We are opposing the intoxication of power, that is, the bli application of law, and not authority as such. The difference m never be lost sight of. It is, therefore, our duty to help the offic in their other work.
6. We are to apply here the same principle that we follow ir domestic quarrel. We should think of the Government and people as constituting a large family and act accordingly.
7. We are not to boycott or treat with scorn those who h different views from ours. It must be our resolve to win th over by courteous behaviour.
8. We must not try to be clever. We must always be frank a straightforward.
9. When they stay in villages, the volunteers should demand fewest services from the village-folk. Wherever it is possible reach a place on foot, they should avoid using a vehicle. must insist on being served the simplest food. Restraining tl from preparing dainties will add grace to the service we ren

10. As they move about in villages, the volunteers should observe the economic condition of the people and the deficiencies in their education and try, in their spare time, to make them good.
11. If they can, they should create opportunities when they may teach the village children.
12. If they notice any violation of the rules of good health, they should draw the villagers' attention to the fact.
13. If, at any place, they find people engaged in quarrelling among themselves, the volunteers should try to save them from their quarrels.
14. They should read out to the people, when the latter are free, books which promote satyagraha. They may read out stories of Prahlad, Harishchandra and others. The people should also be made familiar with instances of pure satyagraha to be found in the West and in Islamic literature.
15. At no time and under no circumstances is the use of arms permitted in satyagraha. It should never be forgotten that in this struggle the highest type of non-violence is to be maintained. Satyagraha means fighting oppression through voluntary suffering. There can be no question here of making anyone else suffer. Satyagraha is always successful; it can never meet with defeat : let every volunteer understand this himself and then explain it to the people.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Kheda Satyagraha

238. LETTER TO A. H. WEST

AS AT SABARMATI,
April 17 [1918]

MY DEAR WEST,

I am writing this at a little village where I have arrived with Mrs. Gandhi and others to preach passive resistance. Here is the cutting.[1] The fight is great but it taxes me to the utmost.

I will not discuss your latest letter; I simply want to say, "Do what you like. Phœnix and all it means are just as much yours as mine. You are on the spot. You must do what you think best. I can but advise." You are right; my views about the vernaculars

[1] There is no clue as to what this was.

must have coloured my view about *Indian Opinion.* I do want to appear in English, but I feel that if it could not be publisl in English it could at least be published in Gujarati. Perhaps y would have me say the reverse. It is enough for me to know t you are on the spot. My affection for you and trust in you rem undiminished. I recall many more of the touching conversati we had in Joubert Park and elsewhere. Then the question of *I* being published in English at the very least. I was not at all r vous when I received your letter enclosing Manilal's letter. knew you would keep calm and take a perfectly philosophic view the whole thing. I shall keenly watch the progress of your new a bold experiments. Please give my love to Granny & Mrs. W I wonder how Sam has taken all this. Please ask him to w to me.

With love,

Yours,

M. K. Gan

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 4429. Cour A. H. West

239. *SPEECH AT DANTALI*

April 17,

We are carrying on this struggle to secure justice from Government. Whilst coming here, I observed people using go to urge bullocks yoked to carts or ploughs. This cruelty is forgivable in us, especially as we claim to be protectors of c To save the cow we engage in big fights with Muslims, but we not hesitate to apply goads to bullocks. It is for sins such as t that we have to suffer. I trust the use of goads will disappear now. When, driving here in a bullock-cart from Petlad static saw the bullocks being pricked with a goad, I felt that refrai from wearing shoes yet driving in a cart was a far greater than wearing shoes. I am here today not to talk about kinc to animals but about justice; all the same, believing that we do justice to others if we want justice for ourselves, I took occasion to say all this. It is not so very difficult to pay the revenue to the Government. One can borrow the money someone or sell some land or a buffalo and pay up. Then take upon ourselves all this bother of not paying and allowing goods and lands to be confiscated? This is how the wise

LETTER TO E. L. L. HAMMOND.

As at Sabarmati (4) [L.14/21]

18th April

My dear West,

I am writing this at a little village where I have arrived with Mrs Gandhi & others to preach passive resistance. Here is the cutting. The fight is great but it tells me to the utmost.

I will not discuss your latest letter. I simply want to say do what you like. Please [illegible] all it enclosing Manilal's letter. I know you will [illegible] keep calm and take a perfectly philosophic view of the whole thing. I shall keenly watch the progress of your new & bold experiment. Please give my love to Granny & hers best. I wonder how Sam has taken all this. Please ask him to write to me.

With love yours

M K Gandhi

advise us. I have given my answer to this at many places. The question is one of principle, not merely of paying the land revenue. We pay because we are afraid of the Government; it is this fear we wish to get rid of. The gist of all that the Commissioner said was this : that the people must not disobey the Government's order. The idea I want to put into you, on the contrary, is that there is no disloyalty in disobeying an unjust order of the Government; rather, it is the purest loyalty to do so. To submit to an unjust order without even a protest is a sign of weakness; it is sheer cowardice. For instance, even in our domestic life, a son or a daughter, suffering injustice at the hands of parents, has the right to resist; we want to apply the same rule to our dealings with the Government. We do not oppose the Government to bring it down or seek anything from it through unfair means. We seek justice through self-suffering. Till today, we suffered out of fear and timidity and now we wish to suffer on purpose. The Government is entitled to test us. You friends, men and women, have been playing a game with the Government; but, when the Government starts confiscating your lands, it will be seen how many of you can hold out. When it has done its worst by way of repression and sees that you will not bend despite it all, it will climb down all too readily. . . .[1] When the people tell their Government with one voice that they will not submit to its unjust orders, the latter is bound to yield. This has ever been so. It is our duty to be loyal to the Government. What difficulty can there be for a people so loyal in obtaining justice from the British Government? That is why I tell you to remain determined till the very end and not to lose heart.

It is desirable that you should all understand the full meaning of satyagraha. Four days ago, I met Mr. Carmichael in Bombay. He is the head of the Revenue Department. In the course of our conversation, he asked me to consider whether this struggle would ultimately raise or lower the people morally, will teach them respect for law or contempt for it. I told him that there was no fear of their moral sense or loyalty being weakened. In satyagraha, people cannot but gain in moral strength and learn to be more courteous. If we were to suffer moral harm, our struggle would not be satyagraha but *duragraha*. Our crops have been in most places less than four annas and, in some villages, less than six annas. That being so, according to the Revenue Code, the collection of revenue

[1] The omission is in the source.

should be suspended to the extent of half the amount. This our demand, one which we claim as our right. Accordingly requested the Government to order the suspension. It did accept our assessment of the crops. Thereupon, we asked the app ment of a committee of inquiry. We assured the Government if it were proved correct, we would accept the officers' assess of the crops. Even then, the Government refused to appo committee. Under these circumstances, we should not pay assessment. If we fail, in this struggle, to get our rights recog by the Government, we shall never be able again to lift our h I notice that your big two-storeyed houses are in a dilapi condition; the reason for this is that you have not the money which to carry out the necessary repairs. From this I can see the people are impoverished. Bad years are a part of our cloth and food are enormously dear; diseases are so ran that, even when there is no war, people die before their Having regard to the times, I have advised the people of K district, who value their self-respect, to secure justice by subm voluntarily to injustice and oppression. We can secure i through insolence but manliness. Our struggle is so straig ward that it is bound to increase our moral strength. I advis emphatically, therefore, not to forsake truth on any acc Anyone who has but a glimpse of the truth, will, in every st takes, follow truth and morality. Make courtesy and truth a of your life. Caught in a big fire, let us all unite and figl Government. This is a fine opportunity for us to work fo uplift.

I repeat to all friends: "Remain steadfast." To the lac say: "Give courage to your husbands, brothers, sons."

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

240. SPEECH AT CHIKHODRA

April 17, 1918

I had hoped to meet you all last week, but I went to Ahmedabad to see the Commissioner and then I had to go to Bombay to meet his superior, Mr. Carmichael. I could not, therefore, come earlier as I had hoped to. If Vallabhbhai and I have come here to Chikhodra and the neighbouring villages, where reigns the order of Dayanand Saraswati, it is not, certainly, to give you encouragement but to receive it ourselves from you, or, if I may say so, not to kindle fire in you but to receive some of that divine light from you. I am sure you will prove me right by holding out in this struggle till the very last.

Dayanand Saraswati is among the foremost of the great spiritual teachers India has produced in the past. I hope that this and the surrounding villages, following as they do this great teacher, will resound with holy chants from the Vedas and also live their life as enjoined by the Vedas.

I hope, moreover, that they will observe the disciplines of *yama*[1]-*niyama*[2] and rigorously keep the vow of swadeshi as well. It would pain me very much to learn that the people of Chikhodra do not wear locally produced cloth, but use either foreign or mill-made cloth. I am taken aback as I see the clothes of many of you here. I see that the cloth is mill-made, either foreign or Indian. To my mind, mill-made cloth is seventy-five per cent foreign. The machinery on which the cloth is woven is foreign and all its benefit goes to foreign workers. Those who wear mill-made cloth may have this satisfaction that the money they pay for its manufacture will go to our mill-hands. But hardly anyone stops to consider that these mill-hands, leaving their agriculture, give up a fine profession and a simple life to join the mills. It is my advice, therefore, that you, in this and the surrounding villages, where Dayanand Saraswati's order holds sway, should use your own cloth and so keep the rule of non-possession and that of non-violence, for both these are included in the law of swadeshi. This latter holds within

[1] Any moral duty or religious observance; the *yamas* are usually said to be ten, but their names are given differently by different writers. They include celibacy, compassion, truth, charity, non-violence, etc.

[2] Any voluntary or self-imposed religious observance, dependent on external conditions

itself the basic principles of satyagraha. Having explained th in brief, I proceed to the main subject.

In employing satyagraha against the injustice done by Government, adherence to truth and non-violence is very necessa Where the crops have been less than six annas, collection of l the revenue should be suspended, as provided in the rules fran by the Government. It refuses to abide by this rule and tells in these harsh and bitter words : "Nothing will avail you in tl you will rather stand to lose. Nor can the people have any say the Revenue Code." The Government argues that we cannot t any matter arising out of it to the High Court or any other co but that the people should petition the Collector, approach Commissioner in the event of the Collector turning down t petition, and, if the latter refuses to intervene, they may go r up to the Governor. In the present case, however, the Com sioner has spared no threats; not stopping at this, he had a lett the Governor's brought to the meeting and went to the lengt saying that whatever he did would be upheld by the Gover I have never seen or heard of such unlimited authority in hands of one single officer anywhere. Our kings sometimes to oppress the subjects and rob them of their possessions, b cannot believe that such a thing can happen under British If, keeping within the limits of the law, we decide not to pay land revenue, there is no disloyalty to the Government. respectfully we accept the law and want the Government of also to be governed by it. I would advise you to let your l be confiscated, even if they be worth not three million but hundred million. Ours is a fight in the way of satyagraha an must fight it with the purest soul-force. Its secret lies in be anything that may be inflicted on us. This implies the obser of perfect non-violence; and hence it is that we have called holy fight. We want to win, not by striking terror in the r but by awakening their sense of justice. We are guilty treason in doing so nor do we thereby prove ourselves enem religion. Our struggle is based on truth and we claim justice the Government on humanitarian, religious and ethical grc Our action is thus altogether unexceptionable. I have fa you, men and women of Chikhodra, that you will unde the principles of satyagraha aright and follow them. There remedy like satyagraha to see an end to your suffering. I use it, you will discover that it alone is the right remedy a our present grievances and those to come. You should hol till the last in the fight on which you have embarked. I

fail to do so, you will have betrayed your religion and the consequences for India will be unhappy. This struggle will make it clear to the administration here in Kheda district that it cannot rule by ignoring popular opinion; that only by respecting public opinion can it maintain itself. This is the real aim behind our struggle and it is for you to see that it is attained. You have taken the pledge to uphold truth. If you read the *Ramayana*, you will realize what value to attach to one's word. Abiding by one's word, one may achieve *moksha*. Be loyal to your pledge, no matter how much you suffer, no matter even if the universe should be blown up. To the ladies, I shall say only this : "Even if you have to part with your furniture and other household things, your cattle and your land, do not despair. Help the men in your families to honour their pledge. May God give you the wisdom to be loyal to that pledge."

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

241. SPEECH AT RAS[1]

April 18, 1918

Last week Vallabhbhai and I were to be here, but I had to go to Bombay and Ahmedabad and could not come. I apologize to you for this.

Owing to the heat today, I casually asked how far the venue of the meeting was. I was informed that it was close by, so I decided to walk down. However, my young friends saw to it that I did not feel the heat. To be sure, that bespeaks their love for me. Their kind turn also suggests that the advice I have been giving has appealed to you all. You know, however, that my advice will let neither you nor me sleep soundly, nor will it permit any rest to my co-workers. It can mean only suffering, sleepless nights and running from village to village. You should let your buffaloes be seized, your jewellery taken away and your lands confiscated. It is because you believe that I advise you for your good that you shower so much love on me. I am very happy at this, but I am also fully aware, at the same time, what responsibility

[1] A village in Borsad taluka; the meeting was largely attended by agriculturists from the surrounding villages.

rests on me and how it increases as the fight intensifies. Despite the complexity and the seriousness of the problem, I do not feel even in the inmost depth of my heart that I should withdraw this advice. As days pass and the struggle assumes its real form, I feel that, had I not given the advice I did to the people of Kheda district, I would have failed in my duty to Gujarat. Had I not given this advice, my trying to serve society and the country, while comfortably settled here in Gujarat, would have made me always feel that my dedication was imperfect in that measure. The advice I have given in the present situation will raise the moral standards of men and women. Simultaneously, the people of Kheda will come up and their triumph will be proclaimed all over India.

Looking at the matter from another point of view, the Government has made it a policy not to consult the people or respect their opinions at all. This is our experience in legislatures, municipalities and other public institutions and that is so because they do not have the backing of public opinion behind them.[1] When we are afraid of even the petty constable and take to our heels at the mere sight of an approaching *ravania*, how can we ever face a big officer? We dare not utter a single word before him. This condition is worse even than that of the animals. These, when they have had enough of beating, obstinately refuse to move or do our will. In comparison with them, consider what sort of condition ours is. If, therefore, we would give proof of our being men, we must shed fear; if we do, we shall win in this struggle. In the same way that in Mr. Pratt's meeting at Nadiad the farmers replied to him boldly, we should cultivate sufficient courage to place the facts even before the Governor. We shall not be insolent in our fight; we desire to fight by means of soul-force, to win through self-suffering. This is a divine, immutable law; our scriptures declare that, if we would have happiness, we must go through suffering, do *tapascharya*. King Dasharatha did so, to get sons like Bharat, Rama, Lakshman and Shatrughna. And so did King Nala, too, for the sake of truth and self-respect, bearing countless afflictions. That is the reason why at early dawn we remind ourselves of these ever memorable holy souls. These divine tales are a part of our heritage. . . .[2] By suffering voluntarily, we seek through truth and non-violence to end our sufferings . . . .[3] The

[1] Reports in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 22-4-1918, and *New India*, 24-4-1918, quote words to the same effect, but have in addition the sentence, "We have got no scope there to assert our opinions."

[2] & [3] Omissions are in the source.

people of Kheda district have taken upon themselves to demonstrate this principle to the world. It is a principle which will be of great service to the world . . . .[1] Our crop has been less than four annas; and so, according to the Revenue Code, the Government should have suspended the assessment this year. Mr. Pratt argues that our figures are incorrect and wants to enforce the collection. We insist that what we say is one hundred per cent true, that it is the Government's figures which are incorrect, and that, accordingly, the Government should suspend the assessment. There is, thus, an element of petty self-interest in this struggle.

But it also involves a far more important issue than this, namely, that the Government should learn to respect public opinion. As a result of this struggle, it may come about that land revenue is remitted and people may become conscious of their strength; that will be no small gain. We must, therefore, suffer and be loyal to our pledge. We did not resolve on it without thinking. We ventured on the task only after the fullest deliberation. A pledge taken with the purest of motives and for the good of the people can never be betrayed though the sun may rise in the west instead of in the east. I entreat you to cling to it. This is my humble advice. This pledge will purify us and put an end to all our sufferings.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

242. LETTER TO KUMBHAKONAM LAWYERS[2]

[NADIAD,]
April 19, 1918

I was delighted to receive your letter signed by so many of you. I shall send you a teacher as fast as I can. I am trying to secure the services of a volunteer who would teach Hindi for the love of it. The success of this great national effort depends almost entirely upon the action of the Presidency of Madras. But I have great faith in the Tamil brethren rising to the occasion. There will be no limit to our power for serving the land as soon as we make

[1] The omission is in the source.

[2] This was in reply to a letter from 23 lawyers and graduates of Kumbhakonam who, eager to learn Hindi, had asked Gandhiji to send a teacher.

Hindi the common medium of expression throughout the length and breadth of India.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

243. SPEECH AT KASAR[1]

April 20, 1918

I do not wish to speak much here. I have informed myself about the condition in the village. Where there is unity and firmness among the people, things are bound to be happy. *Chothai* notices have been served on you, your buffaloes have been seized and your jewellery taken away. We have borne all this. Now, we are threatened with confiscation of lands. Never forget that the respect we enjoy in society will be safe, and so also our lands, only if we keep our pledge. The latter cannot take precedence over the former. If all of you are ready to fight it out with the Government, we shall see what the Government gains by taking over our lands. In Nayaka, one hundred and seventy-eight *bighas* of land have been confiscated; but I do not believe that land has been confiscated because it is entered so in the register. The Government does not intend to enclose the lands with walls, so that we may not be able to reach them, nor will it be able to do anything of the sort in this satyagraha struggle. Hold out tenaciously, therefore; so you will bring glory to yourselves and to India. If you yield, agriculturists all over India will be demoralized. Bear in mind another thing. Those who have recourse to satyagraha must not be overbearing in their conduct towards others. This is an immutable truth, of universal range like the far-spread rays of the sun. Just as we tell the Government not to use its power as a goad with which to drive us, so also you in your turn must deal out perfect justice to people of all the communities in your town or village.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

[1] Along with Kasturba, Manu Subedar, Vallabhbhai Patel and others, Gandhiji visited Kasar, Ajarpura and Samarkha in the Anand taluka on April 20 and addressed meetings of peasants.

244. SPEECH AT AJARPURA

April 20, 1918

I came to your village once before but, yielding to your pressure, we have all come here again. The teacher here sent me a report of the interesting discussion that the people had with the *mamlatdar* and wanted some clarifications. That is the reason for our being here again.

First of all, I shall say something about the arguments of the *mamlatdar*. He told you that you should keep the terms under which your ancestors acquired the lands from the Government. Let us consider what these terms are likely to have been.

They could not have been what the *mamlatdar* said they were. The Government passes laws which serve its own convenience and, though they do not serve ours, we submit to them. For instance, we submit to the Revenue Code though we are not very happy with it. What was the practice in olden days? It was that the Government was paid *chothai;* in other words, it claimed one-fourth of the yield, if there was any, but nothing if there was none. This was our old system. The present Government believed that the laws it has passed have been for the benefit of the people. Instead of claiming a share of the produce, this Government introduced the system of collecting the Land revenue in cash. I do not believe that any advantage has accrued to the people by this law of the Government. One of the provisions in the Land Revenue Code is to the effect that, if the crops are less than four annas, collection of the assessment should be suspended. But the officers argue that it is in the discretion of the Government whether or not to order such suspension and that it may use the discretion only if it so chooses. This is naked injustice. Governments can maintain their authority only in one way, and that is by respecting public opinion.

Our struggle is not merely for securing suspension of the land revenue; a struggle for such relief would be a petty affair. In truth, we are fighting for the sake of the important issue which is involved in it. That is the issue of democracy, of the revival of democratic Government. The people have awakened and begun to understand their rights. A full understanding of these rights is what is meant by swaraj. Let us water the seeds of the fundamental issues involved in this struggle, and they will produce

sweet fruits for posterity, as sweet as the pleasant shade of this banyan tree. That is the aim this struggle has set before itself. Let the Government ridicule us; but you must realize that this struggle is not for securing a little relief in terms of money, it is in the nature of a foundation for a future democratic structure.

The people will be ruined if they let go their rights out of weakness. Sir William Wedderburn, an ardent and sympathetic friend of the Indian people, used to say all his life that, as the village *panchayats* gradually disappeared, along with them was lost the key to swaraj. These *panchayats* cannot be revived by writing books. If, in every village, the people learn how to manage their affairs, the true key to swaraj will have been found.

A satyagraha struggle is an all-embracing affair. Truth is the very basis which sustains our life. If they come with an order of attachment and you have nothing with you, tell them so; if you have anything, but do not wish to surrender it, let them know that plainly.

If you would not give provisions to Government servants, you should refuse them straight, but you may not truly say that you have no grain and therefore cannot supply the provisions they need. A satyagrahi must speak the truth on every occasion. You should understand clearly the principles of satyagraha and be guided by truth and other rules of moral conduct all your life. Truth is God. Let your jewellery and your lands be taken from you, but do not betray your dharma. I pray God to give you strength to abide by the pledge you have taken. In the revival of this way of dharma lies the key to swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

245. SPEECH AT PALAJ[1]

April 22, 1918

In our daily living two weaknesses are evident. The first is that we do all our work superficially; and the second is that whatever we take in hand, we do it without any understanding of it. We do our work like the actors on a stage who speak out what they have learnt by rote. Consequently, we do not get the results we expect. In our daily dealings, we are like the actor playing Harishchandra,

[1] This was on the occasion of a visit by Gandhiji and his party to Palaj, in the Borsad taluka; over a thousand cultivators listened to Gandhiji's address.

whom we cannot expect to be permeated with truth in every pore of his skin. This is exactly what these girls have proved by their manner of singing *Vandemataram*. We have got into the habit of doing our work anyhow; so long as we do not put our whole heart into our work, we shall not succeed.

Our ancestors knew this and that is why they laid special stress on the correct pronunciation of the *mantras*. Any error they counted as a sin. You asked the girls to sing a grand national song like *Vandemataram*. We do not know in full the greatness of the song, its resonance and its tune. That is the feeling I have about this struggle, that we are fighting it half-heartedly. If that is really so, if we have failed to understand its true import, then like the singing of these girls it will be unavailing. I make these harsh remarks that you may all sit up and be more careful in this struggle.

The second point I wish to make is that we should carry on this struggle with a full understanding of it. Mr. Pratt asked me once whether the people really understand what I have been doing. If they fail to do so [he said] the results cannot but be evil. In such a holy struggle we ought not to work half-heartedly. We are afraid of even petty officials. This should not be so. I keep telling you again and again that, even if we are to meet big and distinguished persons, we need not feel worried. We have only to make up our mind not to be awed by them and to be courteous in addressing them. If there is a difference of opinion, we should put it in proper language. If we get over these shortcomings in our struggle, we should never have to suffer defeat. We must take care that we never act thoughtlessly in this struggle. Nor should fear have any place in it. Truth suffers no harm. You must repeat this at every step.

Vallabhbhai told me that the *mamlatdar* was encamped in this village for four days but had had no success. The farmers remained firm. You have shown this courage and I have nothing more to say. I just told you that I was going to Delhi. I don't like to be away from this district, but I have to go to Delhi in connection with this struggle. The Viceroy is to hold a conference. It will consider how we can render more help in the great war that is being fought in Europe. Perhaps the question of conscription will also come up for discussion. We shall also be advised to put aside all our quarrels with the Government. But this quarrel is not of our seeking, it has been thrust upon us. I will tell them the same thing, that we did not invite this struggle, that it had been forced upon us. When can I say this to the Viceroy? Only if you are firm and true satyagrahis.

We can never lose. It is impossible that they will confiscate our lands, for we have not committed the least offence. Who can ever stop the person who follows the path of truth? Even if your lands should be confiscated, have no fear and do not budge. We are determined to get them back by taking to the ways of outlaws, if need be. It is up to you to preserve the honour of India. This struggle has turned into one for self-respect and prestige. It is a struggle of the brave people of Kheda district to recover their lost property and prestige. We must, for this purpose, reform our ways of daily living. We must stop fighting with one another and get ready to fight oppression by an alien Government. All suffering, whether of internal or external origin, should be treated with the magic remedy of satyagraha. I would tell you, sisters, give courage to the men and for ever repeat this *mantra* : "The pledge can end only with death."

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

246. SPEECH AT SUNAV

April 22, 1918

I feel tempted to talk about the difference I observed between this village and Palaj. When I entered Palaj, I noticed that there was no band there but instead there were the *zanz*[1] and the *pakhaj*[2]. Hearing them, I remembered my childhood days. The feelings of devotion they express, their sweetness and their art, I do not find in the band. The band is a foreign thing; the *zanz* and the *pakhaj* are our own. The band is an imitation, a novelty. They are ancient. The band may sound pleasant to the English and others, but it certainly does not to me. Our ancestors invented an instrument that suited our country; for us, too, it is the only thing. In our religious ceremonies, both instrumental and vocal music find a place. Our native tunes have the power to elevate people from their fallen state; the band has no such power. Why should we, then, give up such simple, beautiful and sweet things as the *zanz* and the *pakhaj*?

The difference between the band and the *zanz-pakhaj* is the difference between modern and ancient ways. If our struggle is

[1] Cymbals
[2] Tabor

the same kind of thing as this band, it will come to nought. Just as the *zanz-pakhaj* suggest a number of ideas, our struggle also has beautiful truths underlying it. If you grasp them clearly, we shall get wonderful results out of them.

Despite all this enthusiasm I observe in you, I am afraid there appears to be an element of play-acting in this struggle. We declare that we don't mind confiscation of our lands, but deep down in our hearts, it seems to me, there is fear. If this is so, we are bound to lose and that will have unhappy consequences for the whole of India. I wish, therefore, that we carry on this fight, unflinchingly, with the aid of truth and dharma, as becomes our ancient civilization.

They say Gujarat is slumbering. Sometimes I am asked why this is so. But I think this charge that Gujarat is, like Kumbhakarna[1], in deep sleep, is undeserved. How can anyone say that, when we find so many men and women assembled here in the scorching heat of noon? All the same, I should like to ask you whether we have really shaken off our slumber or are merely acting awake. The reply should come from the depths of your hearts, that you are no more acting, that you have joined the struggle in all sincerity. This struggle of ours is in the cause of truth. There should not be an iota of falsehood in it. When you succeed in convincing the Government of this, it will conduct itself as our own Government. If, on the contrary, we are trying to be smart or are hypocritical, the Government will not yield. For instance, some friends in Bhavnagar went on a strike, acting hastily. They did not know how to go on with it, not having the strength to suffer. They apologized to the Maharaja. All the world knows that the wages they receive are low but their strike secured them no increase. It gave me a shock to know that they had apologized. I do not understand why they did so. The *mahajan*, too, it may be said, brought humiliation to the strikers by his intervention. I hope that such a situation will not arise here. Ours is an honest request for relief, because the crops have been less than four annas. It is after the fullest deliberation that we declared we would not pay the land revenue. We knew what we were doing. We will never apologize. Our lands may be confiscated and we may be sent to jail; let us weigh this against truth, against our pledge and our self-respect. Which will you find heavier? We are resolved not to surrender, not to betray our pledge.

[1] A brother of Ravana, the king of Lanka; he is described in the *Ramayana* as having been in the habit of sleeping for half the year at a stretch.

What is the purpose behind our pledge? To establish our right. Armies which have been fighting sometimes pay tributes; the side that pays is considered to have accepted defeat. It is our request to the Government that it should accept this fact. The voice of the *panch* is the voice of God. Public opinion is always supreme; we shall have won when we make the Government concede that it is the voice of God. But who can hope to win? There is no need to be afraid of the officer. We should always speak boldly, without reserve. The reserve between the Government and the people must go, as the false reserve between men and women must go.

We can bring this about, not by brute force, but by soul-force or the force of love. He wins who worships soul-force. Brute force has no place in our struggle. We must win only by our soul-force. The true hero is he who is ever ready for death. That is the true Kshatriya quality and to display it is the sole aim of our struggle. When India comes to feel that it has no use for the sword, not only the British but the entire world will come to honour us. By 'us', I mean truth. There is no arrogance in saying this. Where there is truth, there can be no defeat. We have to be very careful that we do not show ourselves wanting in this struggle; for this, we must cease quarrelling among ourselves. Our cause is just, no doubt, but the struggle is due chiefly to Mr. Pratt. Its only aim is to bring the Government to respect public opinion. The Viceroy is to hold a Durbar in Delhi; he will there request the country's leaders to patch up our internal quarrels. I shall tell him in reply that it is not the Kheda people who are fighting, but the Commissioner. We are fighting in self-defence. We have but held up our arm to ward off a blow; we have not attacked anyone. What would be my position, though, if meanwhile you yield? You must, therefore, remain firm and bear any losses you may be put to. Only so can it be proved that the blame lies not with the people, but with the Commissioner.

I assure you that the Government cannot possibly confiscate your lands. They may do so on their records; but, in the absence of our signatures, the lands will not be lost to us. Till now, the responsibility was Vallabhbhai's and mine jointly, but, when I am away in Delhi, the whole of it will be his. You, too, should share it. If you need my presence to keep you free from fear, this satyagraha will not be your struggle but mine. In truth, it is that of the people of Kheda, not mine nor Vallabhbhai's, nor Anasuyabehn's. I can only show you the path. It is for you to tread it. Success depends on the people of Kheda. If you remain firm and cling

to truth, you are bound to win. Even the pledge, by itself, has spread your fame all over India; it is your dharma, then, to keep the pledge, to have courage, to maintain truthfulness and courtesy even while you preserve your self-respect, that you may not lose the good name you have won. Dharma is more important than lands. He who has preserved his dharma will never suffer defeat, will never starve. My first and last advice to you, my prayer, is this : "Never betray your pledge."

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

247. LETTER TO COMMISSIONER[1]

NADIAD,
[Before *April 23, 1918*]

I am a believer in satyagraha. I would gladly give up my weapons and even my all for the matter of that, but I cannot give up my principles.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vol. I

248. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

[ON THE TRAIN TO BOMBAY,]
April 23, 1918

DEAR KASTUR,

You have to be a mother to Maganlal. He has parted from his parents and made my work his own. At present it is Maganlal, if anyone, who has so trained himself that he can carry on my work after me. Who will give him the needed strength? It is for you to show concern for his suffering, to be solicitious of his meals, to save him from all manner of worries. There is bitter quarrelling in Bhupatrai's family; help them to put an end to it. *I should like you to be active in such things. True learning and*

[1] This was in reply to a letter from Commissioner Pratt, whom he had asked for an interview: "If you give up all your weapons and come to discuss, my doors are open to you, but my hands are tied by legal and administrative rules."

greatness lie in this. Don't object to put on a white sari having no border. I shall try to go there early.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

249. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[ON THE TRAIN TO BOMBAY,]
April 23, 1918

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I hear from Ba that Santok and you have been arguing at each other and that you looked sad. I don't wish this ever to happen to you. Be patient in taking Santok with you. Impatience shows absence of love. It is enough if we refuse to help the other party in doing wrong. Your worrying is consuming you and it bars your progress. You should now come out of this state of mind.

All impressions of sense, O son of Kunti,
Are hot or cold, give pleasure or pain;
They but come and pass, ever fleeting,
Bear them unmoved, O Bharata.[1]

Think on this verse and let it sink into your soul. It is a very powerful one and it has brought, to me at any rate, peace in moments of great anxiety. Use Santok's services in [settling] the family quarrels of Bhupatrai.[2] They can and must be brought to an end.

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 5983. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri; also *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. IV

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 14

[2] The sentence can also be read to mean: "The family quarrels of Bhupatrai will engulf Santok also."

250. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

April 23, 1918

I wish to add something to what the Chairman has told you about the steps which have been taken to secure relief from the Government. This struggle was not started by outsiders. Nobody instigated the Kheda public to launch it. There is no political motive behind it. It did not originate with the Home Rulers or with any barristers or lawyers as some people allege. I stand here to vouch for this. It was started by the tillers themselves. After the Political Conference at Godhra, some agriculturists in Kheda decided to request the Government for relief in view of the excessive rains. They wrote to me, informing me that they were legally entitled to relief and asking me whether I would help. You will thus see that this struggle did not originate with outside agitators, though it is true that it attracted the attention it did because of outside help. The support of our Chairman and the Hon'ble Gokuldasbhai[2] made the people confident of success. Some distinguished members of the Gujarat Sabha also made inquiries and convinced themselves that the crops had failed and that relief was called for. Their testimony was sufficient to justify the people's stand; even so, everything possible was done to convince the officers. I testify to this.

Satyagraha is not a way of fighting to which one can resort unless one has a real grievance. It requires more heroism than does fighting a battle. The soldier has weapons in his hand; his aim is to strike the enemy. The satyagrahi, on the contrary, fights by suffering himself. Surely, this is not for the weak and the diffident. Such a one would not be equal to the suffering. The greater the suffering a satyagrahi goes through, the purer he becomes. As gold is tested in fire, so also does a satyagrahi have to go through a fiery ordeal. His only weapon is uncompromising insistence on truth. A true satyagrahi fears nothing and holds fast to truth as he fights.

[1] The meeting was held at Shantaram Chawl, Kandevadi, to acquaint the citizens with the situation in Kheda and to express sympathy with the satyagraha struggle there. Vithalbhai J. Patel presided. The proceedings were mostly in Gujarati and Marathi. A report appeared also in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 24-4-1918.

[2] Gokuldas Parekh

Not men only, but women also have joined this strug Wonderful scenes are witnessed at the village meetings. The wor declare that even if the Government seize their buffaloes, att their jewellery or confiscate their lands, the men must honour t pledge. This is a grand struggle, which has fired one and Its fragrance is spreading everywhere. It is beyond my powe describe the people of Kheda. They have it in them to help Government in meeting the present danger. The *Patidar* cla to be a Kshatriya.

The Government Press Note describes Kheda as a prospe district, and in a sense this is quite true. As they say, "Broac Broach, though in ruins". When I look at people's building am reminded of the greatness which was theirs. By t patience and diligence, by self-exertion, they have turned land of Kheda into a beautiful garden. Tears fill my e though, when I look at their houses. They say they have money, else their fields would have been a still more plea sight.

The Government even now refuses the relief which it o to have granted to such a brave people at a time of natural mity. The reason for their lack-lustre eyes is that they have to go through such calamities time and again. Brothers and si who are present at this meeting! Go to Kheda district, inspec big earthen jars in which they store grain to see if there is look for crops in their fields. If they have nothing with them, are they to do? You can imagine from this how wretched condition must have been. This is our plight, they said. If could pay the year's land revenue next year, they would sa year's interest. But saving them interest is not the idea behinc struggle. Any wealthy magnate of Bombay could easily have them the amount, but that would not have ended their suffe The Government would have assumed from this that every they could raise money on interest and pay up.

In this struggle I wish to establish the principle tha Government cannot decide on collection of land revenue wi consulting the people. Merely saying that the Land Re Code is bad will not bring us relief. There is only one way tc ourselves from our suffering, and that is, by suffering volunt to end our miseries once for all. Mr. Pratt, the Commissior plain about this matter and says that, if he suspended the c tion of land revenue this year, people all over the country think that they could stand up against the Government ev such matters.

This is an auspicious time for learning self-suffering. We don't get an opportunity like this every day. The people have exercised self-restraint on this occasion as was but proper that they should. The people have transformed [this struggle] into a holy war. They declare that they will suffer voluntarily so that their suffering may end. . . .

My experience in Kheda and Champaran teaches me this one lesson, that, if the leaders move among the people, live with them, eat and drink with them, a momentous change will come about in two years. Make a deep study of this struggle; understand the worth of the people of Kheda; give all help you can by way of sympathy and verbal support. We shall not be arrogant in seeking justice. We seek it by awakening the Government to a sense of truth. The people will keep on fighting till they have secured justice.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

251. LETTER TO SIR CLAUDE HILL

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE,
DELHI,
April 26, 1918

DEAR SIR CLAUDE HILL,

It was not without considerable pain that I had to decline the honour of serving on any of the Committees that will be appointed at the eventful Conference[2] or speaking to the main resolution[3].

I feel that the Conference will be largely abortive with the most powerful leaders excluded from it. The absence of Mr. Tilak,

[1] When Gandhiji had finished his address, Tilak moved a resolution of sympathy for the Kheda cultivators, demanding of Government either revenue suspension for a year or the institution of an impartial inquiry into their grievances. B. G. Horniman later moved a resolution condemning the attitude taken by Commissioner Pratt in a speech on April 12.

[2] This was the War Conference convened by Lord Chelmsford.

[3] The resolution read as follows: "That this Conference authorizes and requests His Excellency the Viceroy to convey to His Majesty the King-Emperor an expression of India's dutiful and loyal response to his gracious message, and assurance of her determination to continue to do her duty to her utmost capacity in the great crisis through which the Empire is passing."

Mrs. Besant and Ali Brothers from the Conference deprives it ‹ any real weight.[1] I must confess that not one of us who were present ; today's meeting has the influence of these leaders with the masse Refusal to have them at the Conference shows that there is no re: desire to change the attitude hitherto adopted by those who a: holding the reins of Government. And without any real alteratic in the spirit all your concessions will lose their grace and force ar will fail to evoke genuine loyalty from the masses. If I understan the purpose of the Conference aright, you wish to work upon tl masses. How to evoke in the Indian the loyalty of the Englishma is the question before the Indian leaders. I submit that it is in possible to do so unless you are prepared to trust the trusted leade of the people and to do all that such trust means. So far as A Brothers are concerned there is no proof of their guilt before tl public and they have emphatically repudiated the charge having corresponded with the enemy. Most Mahomedans thir what the Brothers think on the situation.

I feel that for other reasons also I could not effectively serve c the Conference. I have just read the Home Mail papers. Th(deal with the secret Treaties. The revelations make painful readin I do not know that I could call the Allies' cause to be any long just if these treaties are truly reported. I do not know what effe the news will produce on the Mahomedans of India. The Gover ment will best serve the Empire if they were boldly to adivse H Majesty's Government to recede from the false and immoral positi(they placed themselves in by these treaties. No one will be mo glad than I would be to find that my reading of the papers totally incorrect.[2]

[1] Tilak had not been invited; but, after an interview with the Viceroy April 27, Gandhiji wired asking Tilak to attend the Conference. This declined to do as Government would not rescind the externment or(issued against him. Annie Besant, too, had received no invitation, while the . Brothers were still in internment.

[2] Some light is thrown on the background to these observations of Gand ji in *Charles Freer Andrews*, p. 132. Gandhiji had asked Andrews to join h on his way to the War Conference. "In the train on his way there Andre read in the English *New Statesman* an account of the predatory 'secret treati unearthed by revolutionaries from the Russian Foreign Office; Great Brit: was a signatory of these treaties, notwithstanding her public declarations of disinterestedness of her fight for freedom. Andrews thrust the papers bef Gandhi. 'How can you take part in a war conference while this sort of douk dealing is going on?' he demanded." This was another reason why Gandl had initially refused to attend the Conference. Lord Chelmsford, howev

There will be no domestic peace in India so long as local officials administer affairs as they have been doing in Kaira. I am sure the Viceroy does not wish that the people should not resist injustice and tyranny. I do hope that the contemplated spoliation in Kaira will be stopped at once and the just demand of the Kaira people will be complied with.

I would like to warn the Government against accepting or initiating conscription. I hope it will never flourish on the Indian soil. But, in any case, it ought not to be introduced until all voluntary efforts have been honestly made and failed. You will admit that the leaders have with remarkable self-restraint hushed all the tales of the forcible recruitment that is reported to have gone on hitherto. I venture to think that the danger point has been reached.

Lastly a thorough education in Home Rule has now so widely penetrated the masses that nothing short of very substantial evidence of the near advent of Home Rule will secure the real co-operation of the people.

You will now understand and perhaps appreciate my reluctance to speak or to serve on the committees. I can best demonstrate my good wishes by abstaining from the Conference.

Will you please place this letter before the Viceroy at the earliest possible opportunity?

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

252. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE,
DELHI,
April 27, 1918

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

I duly received your wire as also your note of the 19th instant for both of which I thank you.

The development which the situation has since undergone renders the discharge of the [Ali] Brothers more than ever impera-

in the course of an interview, repudiated the report about the treaties as having emanated from interested quarters and expressed his disbelief that the British Cabinet would enter into a treaty to cede Constantinople to Russia. It was on the basis of this clarification that Gandhiji finally agreed to participate in the Conference.

tive. After considerable hesitation and much deep thought, I ha' come to the conclusion that I cannot take part in the Conferen and serve the cause for which it has been called. My reasons a set forth in my letter to Sir Claude Hill,[1] copy of which I beg enclose herewith. I do not know whether His Excellency wou still like to see me about the Brothers. I am in Delhi up to t 29th, but can naturally prolong my stay if necessary.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GAND

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253. LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY

DELI
April 27, 19

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

In fear and trembling I have decided as a matter of duty join the Conference. After the interview with His Excellency[2] a subsequently with you, I feel I could not do otherwise.[3]

Yours sincerel
M. K. GAN

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[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] This took place on April 27.

[3] Gandhiji received the next day the following message from Maffey: "' Viceroy does not believe in your 'fear and trembling'. Nor do I! Excellency is very glad indeed to hear that you will join the Conference have written to Sir Claude Hill to inform him that you will join the M Power Committee which meets at 11 a.m."

Earlier Gandhiji had received, according to *Mahadev Desai's Diary*, Vol. the following message from the Viceroy: "Please assure all your frie that I have already done what I possibly could do. The Scheme submi will not be exactly the Congress-League Scheme, but will substantially be it. I hope *tomorrow* there will be no bargaining, no huckstering therefore. whole world—especially all in England—will be watching with anxious what happens *tomorrow*, everybody's eyes are fixed on tomorrow and I do h there will be no huckstering."

254. LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY

DELHI,
April 28, 1918

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

I would like you please to secure for me His Excellency's permission to deliver my speech at the Conference today in Urdu. I intended to send a translation of it, but I think that I shall speak most effectively by merely speaking the words necessary to support the resolution in question. The answer to my request you will perhaps send per Mr. Andrews.

Will you please tell me how long you are going to stay in Delhi?[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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255. SPEECH AT WAR CONFERENCE[2]

DELHI,
April 28, 1918

I consider myself honoured to find my name among the supporters of this resolution. I realize fully its meaning and I tender my support to it with all my heart.[3]

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2225

[1] To this Gandhiji received the next day the following reply from Maffey: "I now find that in this morning's rush I did not read the end part of your letter and only dealt with the first question—your speech. If I may deal with that, may I say that I know the Viceroy felt very much touched by your presence, by the simple words you said and the way you said them. I am so glad that you see scope for definite work ahead. It is all wanted and you will not regret it. Standing out for rights is not always the best way of getting them. If you can believe in us, fight for us and don't be impatient with us. We leave tonight, but if at any time I can be of service let me know."

[2] This has been extracted from "Letter to G. A. Natesan", 12-5-1918.

[3] Gandhiji has referred to his speech in the Man-Power Committee in his autobiography as follows: "So I attended the Conference. The Viceroy was very keen on my supporting the resolution about recruiting. I asked for permission

256. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*

DE[
April 29, 1

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

It was kind of you in spite of your overwhelming work to read my letter and find time to answer it.[1]

Pray convey my thanks to His Excellency for his kindly se ments.

I am preparing two letters[2] for you which will follow yo Simla. I hardly think I shall be ready before you leave. (of them will contain definite suggestions in which you may use services and the other will simply complete my view on the si tion.

My trust in you is not to be easily shaken. I entirely end what you say about rights. But I have no business to inflict a l letter on you.

I always feel that I am committing a sin when I writ you.

Yours sincere
M. K. GA

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to speak in Hindi–Hindustani. The Viceroy acceded to my request, but su ted that I should speak also in English. I had no speech to make. I spok one sentence to this effect, 'With a full sense of my responsibility, I b support the resolution.' " *Vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. XXVII.

[1] *Vide* footnote to "Letter to J. L. Maffey", 28-4-1918.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Viceroy", 29-4-1918, and "Letter to J. L. Ma 30-4-1918.

257. *LETTER TO VICEROY*

DELHI,
April 29, 1918[1]

SIR,

As you are aware, after careful consideration, I felt constrained to convey to Your Excellency that I could not attend the Conference for reasons stated in my letter[2] of the 26th instant. But after the interview you were good enough to grant me, I persuaded myself to join it, —if for no other cause, then certainly out of my great regard for yourself.

One of my reasons for abstention,—and perhaps the strongest,—was that Mr. Tilak, Mrs. Besant, and the brothers Ali, whom I regard as among the most powerful leaders of public opinion, were not invited to the Conference. I still feel that it was a grave blunder not to have asked them, and I respectfully suggest that the blunder might be partially repaired if these leaders were invited to assist the Government by giving it the benefit of their advice at the Provincial Conferences which, I understand, are to follow. I venture to submit that no Government can afford to disregard leaders who represent large masses of the people, as these do, even though they may hold views fundamentally different. At the same time, it gives me pleasure to be able to say that the views of all parties were permitted to be freely expressed at the Committees of the Conference. For my own part, I purposely refrained from stating my views, either at the Committee—on which I had the honour of serving—or at the Conference itself. I felt that I could best serve the objects of the Conference by simply tendering my support to the resolutions submitted to it,—and this I have done without any reservation. I hope to translate the spoken word into action as early as the Government can see its way to accept my offer, which I am submitting simultaneously herewith in a separate letter. I recognize that, in the hour of its danger, we must give,—as we have decided to give—ungrudging and unequivocal support to the Empire, of which we aspire, in the near future, to be part-

[1] Though drafted on this date, it appears to have been sent to the Viceroy at Simla only the following day, with a covering note addressed to J. L. Maffey; *vide* the following item.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Sir Claude Hill", 26-4-1918.

ners in the same sense as the Dominions overseas. But it is simple truth that our response is due to the expectation that goal will be reached all the more speedily on that account—e as the performance of a duty automatically confers a corresponc right. The people are entitled to believe that the imminent refo alluded to in your speech will embody the main, general princi of the Congress-League Scheme, and I am sure that it is this f which has enabled many members of the Conference to tender the Government their whole-hearted co-operation.

If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps, I wc make them withdraw all the Congress resolutions, and not whis "Home Rule" or "Responsible Government" during the pe ency of the war. I would make India offer all her able-boc sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment; and I kı that India by this very act would become the most favoured par in the Empire and racial distinctions would become a thing of past. But practically the whole of educated India has deci to take a less effective course, and it is no longer possible say that educated India does not exercise any influence on masses. I have been coming into most intimate touch with ryots ever since my return from South Africa to India, an wish to assure you that the desire for Home Rule has widely pe trated them. I was present at the sessions of the last Cong and I was party to the resolution that full Responsible Governn should be granted to British India within a period to be fi definitely by a Parliamentary Statute. I admit that it is a l step to take, but I feel sure that nothing less than a definite vi of Home Rule—to be realized in the shortest possible time— satisfy the Indian people. I know that there are many in Iı who consider no sacrifice too great in order to achieve the e and they are wakeful enough to realize that they must be equ prepared to sacrifice themselves for the Empire in which they h and desire to reach their final status. It follows, then, that we but accelerate our journey towards the goal by silently simply devoting ourselves, heart and soul, to the work of delive the Empire from the threatening danger. It will be nati suicide not to recognize this elementary truth. We must perc that, if we serve to save the Empire, we have in that very secured Home Rule.

Whilst, therefore, it is clear to me that we should give to Empire every available man for its defence, I fear that I car say the same thing about financial assistance. My intimate ir course with the ryots convinces me that India has already don

to the Imperial Exchequer beyond her capacity. I know that, in making this statement, I am voicing the opinion of the vast majority of my countrymen.

The Conference means for me, and I believe for many of us, a definite step in the consecration of our lives to the common cause. But ours is a peculiar position. We are today outside the partnership. Ours is a consecration based on the hope of a better future. I should be untrue to you and to my country if I did not clearly and unequivocally tell you what that hope is. I do not bargain for its fulfilment. But you should know it. Disappointment of the hope means disillusion.

There is one thing I may not omit. You have appealed to us to sink domestic differences. If the appeal involves the toleration of tyranny and wrongdoing on the part of officials, I am powerless to respond. I shall resist organized tyranny to the uttermost. The appeal must be to the officials that they do not ill-treat a single soul, and that they consult and respect popular opinion as never before. In Champaran, by resisting an age-long tyranny, I have shown the ultimate sovereignty of British justice. In Kaira, a population that was cursing the Government now feels that *it*, and not the Government, is the power when it is prepared to suffer for the truth it represents. It is, therefore, losing its bitterness and is saying to itself that the Government must be a Government for the people, for it tolerates orderly and respectful disobedience where injustice is felt. Thus, Champaran and Kaira affairs are my direct, definite, and special contribution to the war. Ask me to suspend my activities in that direction, and you ask me to suspend my life. If I could popularize the use of soul-force, which is but another name for love-force, in the place of brute force, I know that I could present you with an India that could defy the whole world to do its worst. In season and out of season, therefore, I shall discipline myself to express in my life this eternal law of suffering and present it for acceptance to those who care. And if I take part in any other activity, the motive is to show the matchless superiority of that law.

Lastly, I would like you to ask His Majesty's Ministers to give definite assurances about Mahomedan States. I am sure you know that every Mahomedan is deeply interested in them. As a Hindu, I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their sorrows must be our sorrows. In the most scrupulous regard for the right of these States, and for the Muslim sentiment as to places of worship, and in your just and timely treatment of the Indian claim to Home Rule, lies the safety of the Empire.

I write this, because I love the English Nation, and I wish evoke in every Indian the loyalty of the Englishman.

I remain,
Your Excellency's faithful serva
M. K. GANDHI

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258. LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY

NADIA
April 30, 191

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

In pursuance of my declaration at the Conference yesterda I wish respectfully to state that I place my services at the disposal the authorities to be utilized by them in any manner they choos save that I personally will not kill or injure anybody, friend or foe.

But it would be better perhaps if I were to state how, in n opinion, my services may be best used.

In the first place, it is necessary in order to make my wo effective that I should receive permission to go to Chindwara ar see the brothers Ali. I would like to confer with them and asce tain from them their advice as to the objects of the Conferenc I have little doubt that they will approve of co-operation. If tl Government would accept the request originally made by me, th would instantaneously soothe both Hindus and Mahomedans l releasing the brothers, if only as a war measure, in order to a vance the objects of the Conference. I shall be content for tl time being with the permission to see them. I merely state th their release would, from the war standpoint, be a more effecti act. Of course I shall reserve to myself the right to press f their release in any case.

Further I desire relief regarding the Kaira trouble. Rel will entirely disengage me from that preoccupation which I m not entirely set aside. It will also enable me to fall back for w purposes upon my co-workers in Kaira and it may enable me get recruits from the district. The problem there is extreme simple. I have suggested that the revenue—now probably le than four lakhs of rupees—be suspended this year, with the provi that those who can will be put upon their honour and expect

[1] The letter appears to have been drafted on April 29 but actually se on this date.

to pay revenue voluntarily. I have already offered myself to see that the well-to-do cultivators pay the revenue. If this offer is not acceptable, I have suggested an impartial committee to inquire into the differences between the authorities and the cultivators. I suggest that action in this matter be taken as a war measure. This will obviate the fear of the relief being regarded as a precedent.

Pray understand that my offer is not conditional upon relief in either case. I merely ask for relief in the two cases in furtherance of the common object.

As for my work, I would like, for the time being, to travel about the country and place before the people the desirability of offering their services and ascertain the possibilities of success. I would, if I am to do this, like detailed information as to the areas in which, in the opinion of the experts, work should be done and some instructions as to the nature of it and any further information that they may consider I should possess.

If it is desired that I should personally wait on any of the officials or meet you, I would be prepared to come up to Simla. You may give me as short a notice as you like after the 4th of May. My address would be Nadiad.

I suppose I must give you something of my past record. I was in charge of the Indian Ambulance Corps consisting of 1,100 men during the Boer Campaign and was present at the battles of Colenso, Spionkop and Vaalkranz.[1] I was specially mentioned in General Buller's despatches.[2] I was in charge of a similar corps[3] of 90 Indians at the time of the Zulu Campaign in 1906, and I was specially thanked by the then Government of Natal. Lastly, I raised the Ambulance Corps in London consisting of nearly 100 students on the outbreak of the present war, and I returned to India in 1915 only because I was suffering from a bad attack of pleurisy brought about while I was undergoing the necessary training.[4] On my being restored to health, I offered my services to Lord Hardinge, and it was then felt that I should not be sent out to Mesopotamia or France, but that I should remain in India. I omit reference to renewals of my offer to Provincial authorities.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

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[1] *Vide* Vol. III, pp. 129, 137-41, 146-7, 216-7 & 219-22.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 181.
[3] Indian Stretcher-bearer Corps, *vide* Vol. V, pp. 368-74.
[4] *Vide* Vol. XII, pp. 535-41 & 558.

259. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*

NADIAI
April 30, 191

DEAR MR. MAFFEY,

I would like you please to read the letter to the Viceroy an wire to me at Nadiad whether His Excellency has any reason wh it may not be published.[1] It is intended to counteract forces (darkness. I am simply besieged with inquiries as to my positioı The people are befogged. Dame rumour is doing all the mischi she can. I want to overtake her. You will forgive me for m apparent impatience.

The other enclosure[2] contains my offer. You will do with what you like. I would like to do something which Lord Chelmsfoı would consider to be real war work. I have an idea that, if became your recruiting agent-in-chief, I might rain men on yo Pardon me for the impertinence.

The Viceroy looked pale yesterday. My whole heart weı out to him as I watched him listening to the speeches. May Gc watch over and protect him and you, his faithful and devot Secretary. I feel you are more than a secretary to him.

Yours sincerel
M. K. GAND

PS. The Reverend Mr. Ireland of St. Stephen's College h kindly offered to deliver this letter into your hands.

M. K. G.

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[1] On May 2, Maffey telegraphed to Gandhiji: "You may publish letteı your own discretion. No authority for doing so should be quoted."

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

260. LETTER TO SIR WILLIAM VINCENT

April 30, 1918

DEAR SIR WILLIAM VINCENT,

I ruffled you on Sunday. But I really came to further the object for which you have overworked yourself. I merely came to tell you that the release of the Brothers Ali was calculated to encourage recruiting. If I did not believe this, it would have been sinful for me to expect you to give me a single minute of your time.

You asked me whether I had brought the authorities a single recruit. I suggest to you that it was not a fair question and one might truly serve the Empire and yet not bring a single recruit.

I hope you will not resent this letter, but accept it as an honest explanation of a visit which you so hastily misunderstood.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

261. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE[1]

DELHI,
April 30 [1918]

DEAR GURUDEV,

Much as I should like to keep Mr. Andrews with me a little longer, I feel sure that he must leave for Calcutta tonight. I know you want his soothing presence by you whilst you are keeping indifferent health. And you must have him while you need him. We are on the threshold of a mighty change in India. I would like all the pure forces to be physically in the country during the process of her new birth. If therefore you would at all find rest anywhere in India, I would ask you and Mr. Andrews to remain in the country and kindly to lend me Mr. Andrews now and then. His guidance at times is most precious to me.

Mr. Ambalal has asked me to say that he will welcome you and your company as his honoured guests in his bungalow at

[1] Gandhiji sent this letter to Tagore through Andrews, after he heard that the two were to go abroad.

Matheran. The season there ends about the middle of June. Mr. Ambalal is also prepared to secure for you accommodation at Ooty if you so wish. I suggest that it would be better if you come and stay at Matheran for the time being and then decide whether you will pass the rest of the hot season at Ooty.

I do hope you will soon recover from the nervous strain you are suffering from.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2291

262. *LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI*

NADIAD,
[*April-May, 1918*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

The letter from Limbdi is encouraging. What I advise is that you should, yourself, go to Limbdi and, having taught them the work, post someone else, if necessary. I am sure in my mind that you should now stir out. If you feel like it, you may leave Limbdi occasionally for a day or two and go to the Ashram. Ultimately, we can put Mama there, if we find it necessary. It won't be possible to teach everything in a month and you will be able to tell them so, or explain it to them, after going there. I would advise you to get Shivlal to come over to us, offering him, even, something more by way of pay. When you go, you can see his father in Wadhwan and pacify him. Explain to him that the Ashram is not for turning everyone into good-for-nothing mendicants. Give him names and other particulars of persons in the Ashram who are earning. If Shivlal comes over, it will be easier for you to leave the place. I should like you to go to Limbdi, whatever the difficulties. It will be better if you take Ba with you. She will look after your meals and will also do some work among the women. Santok certainly cannot go now. She will mind the accounts and look after the girls. If you have not sent a spinning-wheel to Anasuyabehn by now, please do so. It is time we started spinning in the Ashram. This can be done only after you have paid a visit to Vijapur and seen the thing for yourself. Is respected Khushalbhai fit enough to join any of th

activities? Would he like to? Devbhabhi may also be made to take interest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the handwritten original in Gujarati: C. W. 5729. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

263. LETTER TO HARILAL GANDHI

[ON THE TRAIN,]
May 1, 1918

I got your letter in Delhi. What shall I write to you? Everyone acts according to his nature. The true end of all effort in life is to gain control over the impulses of one's nature; that is dharma. Your faults will be forgotten if you make this effort. Since you are emphatic that you did not commit the theft, I may believe you but the world will not. Bear the world's censure and be more careful in future. You should give up your notion of what the world means. Your world is your employer. Have no fear if you are tried in a court of law. If you take my advice, do not engage a lawyer. Explain everything to the advocate on the other side.

You had in your hand a diamond which you have thrown away, thanks to your rash and impatient nature. You are no child. Not a little have you tasted of the good things of life. If you have had enough of that, turn back. Don't lose heart. If you are speaking the truth, don't lose your faith in it. There is no God but Truth. One's virtues are no dead matter but are all life. It is a thoughtless and self-willed life you have lived so far. I should like you to bring wisdom and discipline into it.

As things happened, I have done something very big in Delhi.[1] You will find some account of it in the papers. I have no time to write about it. Mahadev will find some time to do so. He was an eyewitness to it all. He has taken your place, but the wish that it had been you refuses still to die. I would have died broken-hearted if I had no other sons. Even now, if you wish to be an understanding son without displacing anyone who has made himself such to me, your place is assured.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] The reference is obviously to his part in the War Conference.

264. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

[BOMBA
May 3, 191

Your "No" had a real value to me. The "Ayes" had value at all.[1]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Nara Desai

265. SPEECH AT ANTYAJ CONFERENCE, BIJAPUR[2]

May 5, 19

Before moving the resolution extending support to the Congress-Lea Scheme and recommending to the Government to recognize the place of *Antya* Gandhiji asked twice:

How many *Antyajas* are present at this meeting?

Finding that there was none, he said, in Hindi:

Why are we wasting our time here, then, keeping awake this hour of twelve? We are like the parrot endlessly repeati *Narayana, Narayana*. I would advise Bhai Shinde[3] to give up ca ing such conferences and to engage himself in some solid wo We can purge ourselves of the sin of untouchability only throu purity of heart. Genuine feeling alone will ensure results, not a unnatural efforts. We pass resolution after resolution for the moval of untouchability, but the result has been nil. To prev the unanimous passage of the resolution, one gentleman argu that the Conference will serve no practical purpose. I say the sa thing.

[1] At a Bombay meeting, Sastri raised a point of order against movin resolution on the Kheda Satyagraha on the ground that seven days' nc of the resolution had not been given. Gandhiji offered, in that case, to w draw the resolution. All except Sastri said they did not want this to be dc Sastri regretted he could not agree to the resolution. It was dropped.

[2] This was the second Depressed Classes Mission Conference. B. S. Ka presided.

[3] V. R. Shinde

When I read out the resolution recommending acceptance of the Congress-League Scheme, I had hoped that it would be supported by a member of the *Antyaj* community, but there is none here at all. What is then the point of passing it? What weight will it carry with Mr. Montagu? I cannot move it. This Conference has no right to pass such a resolution and, therefore, we cannot bring it up here. It would be enough if we gave up behaving unnaturally and took to straightforward ways. We don't observe the *varnashram*. The Brahmin has given up his dharma, the Kshatriya and the Vaisya theirs, and we cling to what is no part of our religion. We are not fit for swaraj.

What should they who demand swaraj do for the *Antyajas*? Our friends like Lord Sydenham are bound to put this question to us, and in reply we shall have to hang our heads in shame. He who demands swaraj must give swaraj to others. It is a principle in law that he who seeks justice should render it to others. I would ask you to give up all this play-acting and in all sincerity of heart offer prayers at this midnight hour so that our sinfulness, our hardness of heart, may disappear.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

266. REPLY TO GOVERNMENT PRESS NOTE ON KHEDA CRISIS[1]

[AHMEDABAD,]
May 6, 1918

The Government Press Note[2] on the Kaira trouble is remarkable for the sins both of omission and commission. As to the paragraph devoted to Messrs Parikh and Patel's investigations, I wish only to say that, at the interview with His Excellency the Governor, the Commissioner challenged the accuracy of their statements. I immediately suggested the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Surely, it was the most proper thing that the Government could have done, and the whole of the unseemly executions, the removal of the cultivators' milch cattle and their ornaments, the confiscation orders, could have been avoided. Instead, as the Press Note says,

[1] A brief summary of the statement appeared earlier in *New India* on May 6.

[2] This was issued on April 24.

they posted a Collector "of long experience". What could he d(The best of officials have to move in a vicious circle. They ha to carry out the traditions of a service which has made of presti a fetish and which considers itself to be almost infallible, and rare admits its mistakes.

With reference to the investigation by Mr. Devdhar and l co-workers, the Press Note leaves on the reader the impression th the Commissioner had responded to their suggestions. At t interview at which I was present, he challenged the report th had submitted to him and said distinctly that, whatever relief granted would not be granted because of the report, which, said in substance, was not true in so far as it contained any n(things, and was not new in so far as it contained any true sta ments.

I cannot weary the public with the tragedy in the Mat Taluqa. In certain villages of the Taluqa which are affected the irrigation canals, they have a double grievance : (1) the or nary failure of crops by reason of the excessive rainfall, and (the total destruction of crops by reason of overflooding. In t second case, they are entitled to full remission. So far as I a aware, in many cases it has not been granted.

It is not correct to say that the Servants of India Soci stopped investigation in the Thasra Taluqa because there was case for inquiry, but because they deemed it unnecessary, so th report says, as I had decided to inquire into the crops of alm every village.

The Press Note is less than fair in calling my method of quiry "Utopian". I do adhere to my contention that, if i cultivators' statements may be relied upon, my method cann but yield absolutely reliable results. Who should know bet than the cultivator himself the yield of his crops? I refuse to l lieve that lakhs of men could conspire to tell an untruth wh there was no great gain in view and suffering a certainty. It impossible for thousands of men to learn by heart figures as to yield—actual and probable—of even ten crops so that the total each case would give less than a four-anna crop. I contend tl my method contains automatic safeguards against decepti Moreover, I had challenged the official *annawari* alike of *kharif* a *rabi* crops. When I did so, the *rabi* crops were still standing. had, therefore, suggested that they could cut the *rabi* crops a test the yield and thus find the true *annawari*. I had suggested t specially of Vadthal. My argument was that if the cultivatc *annawari* of such *rabi* crops was found to be correct and the offici

wrong, it was not improper to infer that the cultivators' valuations regarding the *kharif* crops were also right. My offer was not accepted. I may add that I had asked to be allowed to be present when the Collector visited Vadthal which was taken as a test village. This request was also not accepted.

The Note is misleading inasmuch as it states that, in arriving at my *annawari*, I have not taken into account the *rabi* crops or the cotton crop. I have taken these crops into account. I have simply questioned the logic of the official system. The reason is obvious. If out of a population of one thousand men, only two hundred men grew *rabi* crops, it would be highly unjust to the eight hundred men to force up their *annawari* if without the *rabi* crops their crops showed only four annas or under.

I am surprised at the gross inaccuracies in the paragraph devoted to the crops in Limbasi. In the first instance, I was not present when the official inquiry was made, and in the second instance the wheat, which is valued at Rs. 13,445, included wheat also from two neighbouring villages, so that out of the crops estimated at Rs. 13,445 three assessments had to be paid. And what are Rs. 13,445 in a population of eighteen hundred men? For the matter of that, I am prepared to admit that the Limbasi people had a rice crop which too gave them as many rupees. At the rate of forty rupees per head per year to feed a man, the Limbasi people would require Rs. 72,000 for their food alone. It may interest the public to know that, according to the official *annawari*, the Limbasi wheat alone should have been worth Rs. 83,021. This figure has been supplied to me by the Collector. To demonstrate the recklessness with which the Press Note has been prepared, I may add that if the Limbasi people are to be believed, the whole of the wheat crop was on the threshing floor. According to their statements, nearly one-third was foreign wheat. The Limbasi wheat, therefore, would be under Rs. 9,000. The official *annawari* is ten annas. Now, according to the actual yield, the wheat *annawari* of Limbasi was eleven annas as against the official ten annas. Moreover, a maund of wheat per *bigha* is required as seed and the Limbasi cultivators had 3,000 (Rs. 3 per maund equals Rs. 9,000) maunds of wheat on 1965 *bighas*; i.e., the wheat crop was a trifle over the seed. Lastly, whilst the crop was under distraint, I had offered to the Collector to go over to Limbasi myself and to have it weighed so that there might be no question of the accuracy or otherwise of the cultivators' statement. But the Collector did not accept my offer. Therefore, I hold that the cultivators' figures must be accepted as true.

Merely to show how hopelessly misleading the Press Note is, I may state that the Gujarat Sabha did not pass a resolution advising passive resistance. Not that it would have shirked it, but I felt myself that passive resistance should not be the subject of a resolution in a Sabha whose constitution was governed by the rule of majority, and so the Gujarat Sabha resolution left it open to individual members to follow their own bent of mind. It is true that most of the active members of the Sabha are engaged in the Kaira trouble.

I must repudiate totally the insinuation that I dissuaded payment by people who wished to pay. The figures given in the Press Note showing the collection in the different talukas, if they prove anything, prove that the hand of the law has hit them hard and that the fears of the *ravanias* and the *talatis* have proved too strong for them. When after confiscation and sales under execution the Government show a clean bill and no arrears, will they contend that there was no case for relief or inquiry?

I admit that the suspension is granted as a matter of grace and not as a matter of right enforceable by law, but the concession is not based on caprice, but is regulated by properly defined rules, and the Government do not contend that if the crops had been under four annas, they could have withheld suspensions. The sole point throughout has been the difference as to *annawari*. If it is true that, in granting concessions, the Government take into account also other circumstances, e.g., in the words of the Press Note, "the general economic situation", suspension is doubly necessary this year because of the plague and high prices. The Collector told me definitely that he could not take this last into account. He could grant suspension only under the rules which had reference only to crops and nothing else.

I think I have shown enough here to warrant a committee of inquiry and I submit that, as a matter of principle, it would be worth while granting the inquiry even if one cultivator remains with an arrear against him, because there is nothing found to attach and the Government might be reluctant to sell his lands. The people have challenged the accuracy of *talati* figures. In some cases there are *talatis* themselves ready to come forward to show that they were asked to put up the *annawari* found by them. But if the inquiry is now held to be unnecessary,[1] why do the

[1] The Government note said: "The Government regret their inability to accept the pressing request which Mr. Gandhi and others are making for an independent inquiry. The agriculturists really cannot claim to have the land

Government not grant suspension, especially when, admittedly, there is only a small number left to collect from and more especially when, if suspension is granted, well-to-do cultivators are ready to pay.

It is evident now that Government have surrendered the question of principle for which the Commissioner has stood.

The Viceroy has appealed for the sinking of domestic differences. Is the appeal confined only to the *raiyats* or may the officials also yield to the popular will, when the popular demand is not immoral or unjust and thus produce contentment?

If distress means starvation, I admit that the Kaira people are not starving. But if sale of goods to pay assessment or to buy grain for food be an indication of distress, there is enough of it in the District. I am prepared to show that hundreds have paid their assessment either by incurring debts or by selling their trees, cattle or other valuables. The most grievous omission in the Press Note, however, is that of the fact that collections are being made in a vindictive spirit. The cultivators are being taught a lesson for their contumacy so called. They are under threat to lose their lands worth 3 crores of rupees for an assessment of 4 lakhs of rupees. In many cases a quarter of the assessment has been exacted as a penalty. Is there not in the above narrative room for a doubt that the officials may be in the wrong?

New India, 9-5-1918

267. SPEECH AT BOMBAY PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

[BIJAPUR,
May 6, 1918][1]

Mahatma Gandhi made a vigorous speech in support of his resolution on the indenture system at the second day's sitting of the Bombay Provincial Conference. Mr. Gandhi moved:

This Conference emphatically urges that nothing short of a complete abolition of the indenture system of recruitment of labour in any form will meet the evils of the system which is a form of slavery which socially and politically debases the labourers and is detrimental to the economic and moral interests of this country.

Mr. Gandhi spoke in Hindi and giving a resumé of the indenture system referred to the degrading effects which it had produced on our people in the Colonies. He also described how it had lowered India and Indians in the estimation of the European peoples. He condemned the Inter-Departmental Committee's recommendations on this question and said in an emphatic manner that the system should go once for all and that no reservations whatsoever should be made.

Young India, 8-5-1918

268. SPEECH AT ANTYAJ CONFERENCE, BIJAPUR

May 6, 1918

I have committed a serious indiscretion. A friend came and said that I was unnecessarily creating a disturbance in Bijapur which is divided into two camps. I did not know the real position. I have not come to throw the apple of discord and to exacerbate the feelings of the parties.

Lokamanya Tilak must be here to guide you and me. I am but a child of three in politics. I have yet to see, to consider, and to learn things. I apologize for creating this disturbance. In common meetings one may explain his views thoroughly freely without being charged with the idea of creating a disturbance.

[1] The Conference, according to Bombay Secret Abstracts was held from May 5 to 8 at Bijapur. Vithalbhai Patel presided.

As I propose to put into practice the programme I have mapped out, I should not be anxious to ascertain the feeling running in all parts of India. But as you are all come here with preconceived notions, I cannot discuss my position here. I would like to exchange views and understand your feelings and deciding motives and reach the backs of your minds. But I shall prefer to come here in a calmer atmosphere and shall only then come to steel your hearts when we are not cramped with resolutions before us. I think Mr. Kelkar has taken the most reasonable position and that, at this stage, we must accept the Congress Committee's resolution.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

269. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI[1]

[NADIAD,]
May 9, 1918

BHAISHRI MAHADEV,

I never dreamt that you would so completely misunderstand what I said out of boundless confidence in you. I did expect that, because you are so much attached to me, it would be something of a shock to you to have to go to Champaran. But how could you possibly imagine that, thinking you unworthy, I had found this indirect way of getting rid of you? I thought you were the only person who could come up to my expectations and, therefore, I suggested your going to Champaran. I believed that the work at Badharwa was not beyond the capacity of Durga. Maybe I was wrong in my estimate. At present, I shall only tell you, for your peace of mind, that all your guesses are wrong. It was my respect for the capacity of you both which prompted me to make the suggestion. I have told both Raojibhai and Devdas that I would be hard put to it without your help. You have made yourself indispensable to me. I meant what I wrote to Polak. You have not disappointed me. It is for your efficiency and your character that I have chosen you to help me in my political work and you have not disappointed me. Add to this the fact that you

[1] This was in reply to Mahadev Desai's letter of May 8, remonstrating against Gandhiji's wish that the former proceed to Champaran.

can cook *khichdi*[1] for me, with so much love. More, when we meet.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

270. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING

[SABARMATI,]
May 11, 1918

MY DEAR ESTHER,

I have your letter. I shall—we shall look forward to your coming to the Ashram during Xmas. The main buildings will then have been ready and the weather will be delightful.

I hope you have read my letter[2] to the Viceroy as also my letter[3] in reply to Mr. Pratt's speech. They contain in the briefest form my views on Government and the philosophy of life, and the one to the Viceroy shows in the vividest form the view I take of the law of love and suffering. Passive Resistance expresses the idea in the crudest form. Indeed, I dislike the phrase as a weapon of the weak. It totally misrepresents the law of love. Love is the epitome of strength. Love flows the freeliest [*sic*] only when there is entire absence of fear. Punishments of the loved ones are like balm to the soul.

Will you not try an absolute fast for your liver? You may drink boiled water copiously and, if that is not enough, you may drink orange juice diluted with water. If you feel weak and faint, lie in bed, better still take a cold hip bath, i.e., sit in a tub with your legs and the upper part of the body out of water. It is most invigorating. There is nothing like fasting for liver complaints.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Boiled rice with pulses, vegetables, etc.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Viceroy", 29-4-1918.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to *The Bombay Chronicle*", 15-4-1918.

271. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

SABARMATI,
May 12 [1918[1]]

DEAR MR. NATESAN,

Here is my speech.[2]

I consider myself honoured to find my name among the supporters of this resolution. I realize fully its meaning and I tender my support to it with all my heart.

I had your note with the Rs. 100. You do not now need any reply to the note!

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2225

272. SPEECH AT DHUNDAKUVA[3]

May 13, 1918

Mahatmaji began to address the people by saying that the result of their struggle was a nearly complete, if not a complete, victory inasmuch as Mr. Pratt had not been able to execute his threats and carry out his vow. He divided vows into two classes, viz., divine and devilish. Those vows were divine which could not be broken and should be carried out even at the cost of life, and which could stand resistance. Devilish vows were those that required ever to be resisted. A satyagrahi made it his business to offer his resistance to such vows every time and everywhere. And Mr. Pratt's was such a vow, that is, of the devilish type. Mr. Pratt had always been respected by him (the speaker), and he was no bad officer, but those who were not bad officers sometimes committed serious blunders. Mr. Pratt's object was to punish the agriculturists for their disobedience of Government's authority, but he could not punish them as he chose the devilish means.[4] The whole district was now fired with a spirit that was never in the people before. They had awakened to a sense of their

[1] & [2] The speech was the one Gandhiji made at the Man-Power Committee of the War Conference on April 28, 1918.

[3] A village in Borsad taluka

[4] During the month, Government resorted increasingly to confiscation of land for realization of revenue arrears; but later, forfeiture of land was largely set aside and dues realized through auction of movable property.

rights. Mahatmaji explained to them that in defending themselves against oppression by passive resistance to it, they had blessed the oppressor also, just as Prahlad by his passive resistance blessed his oppressive father. Had Mr. Pratt been allowed to execute his threat, the whole nation would have raised a cry of horror, and Mr. Pratt would no doubt see some day that he was luckily spared that catastrophe.

Before concluding, he said he could not omit to refer to one painful incident that had been brought to his notice. He had been told that the *mukhi* in Dabhasi was using his evil influence to persuade people to evade the effects of attachments by keeping money easily accessible to attaching officers. It was, Mahatmaji said, incredible that people could be so simply deluded. It was nothing short of voluntary mischief on the people's part, and calculated to spoil the whole movement.

We will respect the officers, but we won't assist them; we will give them food and shelter, but surely we will not voluntarily point out to them the things to be attached. He who believes that he can evade the effects of attachment by keeping ready things for being attached, has missed the whole spirit of the struggle.

The Dabhasi incident, he repeated, had shocked him, and he hoped it would nowhere be repeated. One thing more he would add in conclusion. He had heard that revenue officers had to go without food and water from some places. He would like to suggest that passive resistance did not mean molestation of others, but simple and pure voluntary suffering. He feelingly concluded by observing that there ought not to be a single house or village which belonged to a satyagrahi where there was not the practice of truth in word and deed, where no sweet words were spoken, and where one had to go away without food and shelter.

The Bombay Chronicle, 16-5-1918

273. LETTER TO HANUMANTRAO

[KATHLAL,]
May 15, 1918

The *Hindu* comments on Mr. Shastriar's speech[1] are damnable and I think that the best answer to them is not to notice them. Mr. Kasturi Ayyangar[2] is a man who is not to be convinced by any appeal to reason or sense of justice. He has his own notions and he sticks to them with an obstinacy I have rarely seen in any other man. Those who know Mr. Shastriar are not affected

[1] Delivered at the War Conference

[2] Kasturi Ranga Ayyangar, editor of *The Hindu*

by the *Hindu* comments. Those for whom Mr. Kasturi Ayyangar's word is gospel truth will listen to no correction. His (Shastriar's) unapproachable character and his scholarly attainments may be trusted to take care of themselves and to bear down in the end the obsession of his bitterest enemies. I think Mr. Shastriar will give a good account of himself when anyone else is weighed in the balance and found wanting and I think he knows this and he is supremely happy in the consciousness of it. You and I, therefore, have no cause to feel perturbed over the vagaries of Mr. Kasturi Ayyangar or for that matter of anybody else. But all of us have to conspire and, if possible, compel him to look after his body which I hold is not beyond repair.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

274. LETTER TO DABHOLKAR

May 15, 1918

I have your letter. I am grateful to you for writing to me so frankly. There is not a trace of "policy" in my letter.[1] I wrote what I believe to be true, every word of it. You have summed up my ideas perfectly. I do believe that, if we were to sacrifice ourselves silently in our thousands, swaraj would be ours today. If you could not see how this can be even after reading that letter of mine, it is hardly possible for me to explain it in this one. I would, therefore, request you to read that letter repeatedly and to ponder over every word of it till you have understood it. The effort will not go unrewarded. I did not write that letter in a hurry. I took great pains over it and wrote it in perfect sincerity and entirely out of my love for the country. I think my *tapascharya* must be still imperfect if the letter is not clear enough or seems to lend itself to two interpretations. If the country understands my plan and carries it out, I am sure it embraces everything, swaraj and many other things besides. To say that we shall fight [in the war] after swaraj is granted seems, to me at any rate, to betray complete ignorance of the meaning of swaraj. I do not admit that, as a representative of the people, I am in duty bound to

[1] *Vide* "Letter to J. L. Maffey", 30-4-1918.

place before the public all the letters that I write to the Viceroy. All through my life, there have been a good many, and to my mind important, actions of mine in my representative capacity which have remained, and will ever remain, unknown. My first letter[1] to His Excellency the Viceroy was meant for him alone. I cannot give publicity to the views which I expressed to him as to a gentleman and a friend. To publish the courteous but bitter language used in that letter would be inviting mischief. I have given publicity to such part of my conversation with him as would bear being made public. My second letter relates to what I intend to do and, in comparison to the first one, is not very important.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

275. LETTER TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

May 15, 1918

As for the struggle in Kheda, what shall I say? It is a very big one. No one is prepared to believe that this agitation can be carried on only with two or three thousand rupees by way of travelling and other expenses. I asked them to return the sums, which had been collected, about Rs. 25,000 and I find I have to refuse offers of money from many quarters. If I accept money, the struggle will lose its purity; dishonesty will creep in and the people will fall morally. By not accepting contributions, I have saved myself from all this and have been able to keep the fight clean. The whole of India has watched and appreciated this fight. It has been a matter of regret to me that Shastriar has not done so. He will, in course of time. He is a man of noble soul and I have no fears, therefore. I have no doubt whatever that the fight is justified.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Viceroy", 29-4-1918.

276. SPEECH AT SANDESAR[1]

May 16, 1918

The plucky people of this village have shown great courage. The remarkable thing about these gatherings is that women attend them in large numbers and listen to the speeches with great interest. It cannot be said of the Kheda struggle that the men and women do not know what they are doing.

The first duty of a satyagrahi is to ascertain whether he is on the side of truth in what he is about and, if he is assured of that, he should fight for it even at the cost of his life. One who is desirous of giving up his life for the sake of truth is ever ready to do so, when there is occasion to fight for truth. In some of our fights carried on in the name of satyagraha, the reason of our failure lies in our not sticking to the truth on all occasions. They cannot be called satyagrahis who talk of truth, but do not translate it into their actions. They know the value of truth and yet, on occasions, they are not on the path of truth. Those who fight for justice must ever be ready to do justice to others. One has to be true in thoughts as well as in acts. All scriptures say that he who wishes to enter the Temple of Justice must become pure himself. Just as we should enter a temple only after taking a bath and with holy thoughts in the mind, so also, it is only a man of a pure mind who can enter the Temple of Justice. It is a divine law that none with a profane mind may enter there. Those who would have justice should deal out justice to others. That is the first duty of a satyagrahi.

At Agas station, Vallabhbhai handed me a note. If what he said in it is true, I am afraid we show no regard for justice. In that note, members of the *Dhed*[2] community had complained that, for four years, the village people had not given them any part of their share [of the produce]. I do not know whether the complaint is justified or not. If it is, the matter should be settled immediately. Since we demand justice for ourselves, I would request you to do justice to others. I was telling someone this morning that the people of Kheda were happy with this struggle because it was an opportunity for them to rise. We are, at the moment,

[1] This has been collated with a Gujarati report in *Kheda Satyagraha.*

[2] One of the communities regarded as untouchables

fighting the Administration and believe that God is on our side. We now refuse our free services to Government officers. We tell *Kumbhars*[1], *Dheds* and *Bhangis* that they need not work so. Even if they offer to pay, those who are agreeable may work, others may not. Even if scavengers, potters and barbers are offered the fullest payment, they may or may not serve, as they please; they have a right to decide. If we, too, acknowledge this right of theirs, we shall have qualified ourselves for full swaraj. We may succeed in overthrowing this Government, but, assuming in our arrogance that none dare overthrow us, we shall have taken the tyrant's place ourselves. Some Englishmen tell me that I shall have to regret what I am teaching the people. But I am perfectly clear in my mind about this and I see no error in what I am doing. I am convinced that I have given the right advice to the people so far. What I tell them about their duty to the Government, I would not hesitate to tell one section of the community about its duty to any other. Even if that should cost me my head, I would not give up truth. As my head is at the disposal of the Government, so also is it at the disposal of the people. When the people abuse their authority over the poor and oppress them, I would advise the poor to resort to satyagraha and not to leave the path of justice. That is the only road to happiness. The weapon that has fallen into your hands is invaluable. No one can stand against it. One who has realized the beauty of it would firmly say that there is no other religion but that of truth. I have already told you that we have won. This struggle is not for the suspension of land revenue only. If it were so, that could have been obtained long ago. In this struggle, there is much more than that. Even Mr. Pratt admits that this struggle is not for suspension of land revenue only, but it involves the interests of thirty crores of people. It is a struggle between the will of the people and the prestige of officials. We must, by now, realize that the authority of Government is nothing before that of the people. No government has ever yet come into existence which could successfully resist the will of the people. When the people are determined to get their rights, they will have them. We do not want to be discourteous and, at the same time, we would not be slaves. A satyagrahi will never forget his manners, nor give up his point; he will not send away a Government officer unfed. He will offer him water, food and accommodation and thus show his nobility. The Government officer has become our guest and, therefore, whether friend or foe, we should treat him with

[1] Potters

courtesy. He can take away nothing from us against our will. When any of them arrives to execute an order of attachment, it is not for us to place our jewellery and our household utensils before him. If he finds anything of ours and has it attached, we should keep calm and not give way to fear. Justice and truth are to be weighed against money. I would appeal to you to understand all this.

This is a struggle for self-government. We wish that we may get it. But what is the use of that authority in the hands of the weak and the emasculated? The dead body is unable to make use of the sword in its hand, or of the heap of corn placed before it. So a worthless man is unable to do anything. Such a man has no right to eat. It is said in the *Gita* that he who eats without performing *yajna* is a thief. The meaning of a *yajna* is that the body is for the people, for God. It means that one should sacrifice one's self and give up one's all. That is the real *yajna*. He who eats without performing *mahayajna* is a thief. No authority could ever tyrannize over a nation that has understood this. If the true meaning of this saying could blend with our blood and flow in our veins, we have nothing else to win. Then we have won everything. Satyagraha is a celestial weapon. That man only can fittingly hold it who possesses manliness and courage. If we all act up to it after having well understood it, it will be said of India that this is not a land of cowards but of thirty crores of gods.

The Bombay Chronicle, 21-5-1918

277. LETTER TO RAMBHAU GOGATE

SATYAGRAHASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Vaishakh Sud 6 [May 17, 1918]

BHAISHRI RAMBHAU GOGATE,

Kotwal's sister may come now, if she feels like it. But the heat here is so great these days that it will be terrifying to anyone who has been living in Indore. I would therefore advise her to come after June 15. The rains will start soon after that and the air will be a little cooler, or humid at any rate. At present, the sky pours down heat and scorching winds are blowing at all hours. When she comes [in June], Ba will be here and she will assuredly have her company. I am writing this letter after consulting Ba.

I hope she has made herself familiar with the customary diet here and the routine of life, etc.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 3614

278. *LETTER TO J. L. MAFFEY*

ON THE TRAIN,
May 18, 1918

In full confidence that the request contained in my letter of the 29th[1] will be accepted, I am busy making recruiting preparations. But I shall not commence work before I have your reply.[2]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

279. *LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI*

NEARING AGRA,
[*May 18, 1918*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I have made you thoroughly miserable; my intention, however, was to soothe you. Harshness is conquered by gentleness, hatred by love, lethargy by zeal and darkness by light. Your love flows in driblets; but, as a mere drizzle of rain goes to waste, so, I see, does love oftentimes. It is a heavy downpour of rain which drenches the soil to fullness; likewise, only a profuse shower of love overcomes hatred. Where you go wrong is in expecting justice. Go on doing justice yourself. Love is not love which asks for a return. If one were overflowing with love oneself, where could one store the love others might give? This is the hidden significance of seeing all as one. When Mira felt the stab of love,

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Viceroy", 29-4-1918.

[2] Maffey sent extracts from his correspondence with Gandhiji to Lord Willingdon, Governor of Bombay, and informed Gandhiji of his action. For Gandhiji's correspondence with the Governor of Bombay, *vide* "Letter to J. Crerar", 30-5-1918.

she was one with God. This is the principle of *advaita* in actual practice. Follow as much of this as you can; keep cheerful at any rate.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5728. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

280. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[MOTIHARI,]
May 23, 1918

I did not feel moved when I read of Willie's[1] arrest. I sympathize too with the Viceroy's feelings. Why should he [be] called upon to investigate matters of this nature when there is a deadly war going on? Willie and we should meekly suffer. There is no principle at stake in Willie's case. There is no question of race prejudice and none of public feeling. Some must be content to be imprisoned for their views or actions. What is necessary is to correspond with Willie. He will fight his way to freedom, if he needs it. To be anxious about him is to do him injustice. I feel sure that he is happy where he is. I think that public agitation is unnecessary. If you feel like me, you would write a manly letter to the Viceroy for worrying him. I sometimes feel that many of these Englishmen who go through the terrible strain of war without collapsing must be *yogis*. They would be fit for *moksha* if their *yoga* was employed for a better cause.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

281. LETTER TO HANUMANTRAO

May 25, 1918

What I want you to do is not to sever your connection with the Society[2]; but remaining in the Society do the Hindi work. I would like Mr. Shastriar to permit you to go to Allahabad, stay there a year and learn Hindi fairly well, then return to Madras and side by side with your other work spread a knowledge of Hindi among the Telugu people. The fact of your having

[1] W. W. Pearson

studied Hindi will enlarge the scope of your work and enable you if the occasion arose to work among the masses outside the Madras Presidency. I do not know whether you have noticed it. I have. There is almost an unbridgeable gulf between the Dravidians and all the other Indians. The shortest and the most effective bridge is undoubtedly the Hindi language. English can never take its place. When Hindi becomes the common language among the cultured classes the Hindi vocabulary will soon filter down to the masses. There is something undefinable about Hindi which makes it the easiest language to learn and somehow or other there is a licence taken about Hindi grammar such as I have not known to be taken about any other language. The result is that the learning of Hindi becomes largely a matter of memory only. Hence do I say that for doing national work a knowledge of Hindi is an absolute necessity. What can be better than that a member of the Society should give himself a training in Hindi? Mr. Gokhale once told me that he wanted a knowledge of Hindi to be obligatory on the part of all the members and that he wanted Hindi to be the language spoken at the Seciety's meetings. He added that the Tamilians and especially Mr. Shastriar presented the greatest difficulty. He was too old to learn it !!!

You seem to think of Satyagrahashram as something apart from the Society. But I do not. During the last days of Mr. Gokhale's life on this earth his wish was that I should open a branch in Gujarat and bring to life a province which appeared to be politically dead. It fills me with pride to know that I have played a humble part in carrying out the programme. It is a matter not of much moment that Satyagrahashram for very sound reasons cannot be recognized as a branch. The work is there. In so far as it is good in my estimation the credit is the Society's, the failures are due to my limitations and need not be shared by the Society. When in the fullness of time, I have got over my limitations, the Ashram will merge in the Society. Till then even if you wanted to come to the Ashram I would not admit you except as a loan from the Society. So you see that in thinking of you as a candidate for learning Hindi I have not even conceived the possibility of your severance from the Society.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

282. SPEECH AT PATNA

May 25, 1918

Mr. Gandhi returned from Motihari to attend a meeting in Patna City on the 25th ultimo. While in Champaran, he visited the District Magistrate and Sub-Divisional Officer, Bettiah, and then went on and saw his schools at Shikarpur, Madhuban and Dhakka. While at Motihari, he stayed with Babu Gorakh Prasad. Numbers of ryots visited his camp, but most of them were instructed to take their grievances to their local representatives. His visit caused a mild excitement as usual.

The meeting in Patna over which the Hon'ble Mr. Purnendu Narayan Sinha presided was an unusually crowded one, some 8,000 persons attending including over 300 sadhus. It would seem that the people expected a more fiery speech than the one actually delivered, for the enthusiasm evinced at Mr. Gandhi's arrival waned very low as the speech proceeded.

In his opening remarks he referred to the subject of a universal language in India and hoped that within a few years Hindus would learn Persian and Muhammadans would study Sanskrit, so that the two languages might eventually combine. He then went on to say that he had no time to speak to them regarding affairs in Champaran or "the disgraceful episode at Shahabad, but he would say that mutual goodwill between Muhammadans and Hindus would not be attained by recourse to the Special Tribunals; that was a question of mutual consultation and arrangement. The main subject of his speech was "Our Present Condition". The time had arrived for Indians to make their choice. Such opportunities only come once in the lifetime of a nation. He was addressing his remarks more specially to the educated classes. India had been called on for another army; already some seven or eight lakhs were serving outside India and another five lakhs were to be recruited this year. These persons were paid by Government and earned their living by military service. India could not be proud of them, and derived no benefit from their existence. The self-government that the people were clamouring for was not the self-government that he had in mind. They must have a self-government army, and for this it was incumbent on them to supply the five lakhs that Government wanted without waiting for Government to recruit them. The advise he gave them was to raise a republican army, and he called on the people "to go along with him and go wherever the Government directed". (At this stage a fairly large number of people quietly slipped away from the meeting). If they did not provide the men, Government would obtain them somehow or other, if necessary, by enforcing legal compulsion.

Another matter that he wished to speak to them about was the idea that self-government meant the dismissal of the British from India—this was

impossible. All they wanted was to become a great partner in the British Empire. A great leader of India had said: "We are prepared to fight, but on this condition, that you pledge yourself to grant self-government to India." In his opinion, this was not a straight way of obtaining self-government. He advocated that India should provide the men wanted, and impose no conditions—any calamity that overtakes the Empire is one that overtakes India as well. The English race had two outstanding characteristics, they lived in friendship with those who know how to die and those who know how to kill, and they helped those who helped themselves; they would be of one heart with those who claimed their rights at the very first moment they showed their strength and their determination to obtain these rights. Two essentials are necessary in self-government—power over the army and power over the purse, and that is why he repeatedly said that India's ambition to obtain self-government would be blasted if they missed this opportunity of obtaining military training and assisting the Empire, and thereby obtaining self-government. This opportunity would never come again. Only those who are weak are compelled to think of making conditions—the strong impose no conditions.

Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1918

283. SPEECH AT KHANDHALI[1]

[*May 27, 1918*]

The men and women of Khandhali have shown great pluck and courage. But . . . just as when a river is overflooded we are not able to use the overflowing water and just as it flows away to the sea in vain, so some of your boldness and courage is also wasted away. When a Government official went to attach her property, a woman let loose her buffalo. She has committed a blunder in so doing, so also the Government officer who struck her with his umbrella. But remember that you must not commit such blunders. A true satyagrahi cannot do so. The first thing to do in any struggle of satyagraha is to stick to truth. If we make a very subtle definition of truth, it includes many things. But because our definition of truth is rather narrow, we are compelled to add a little to it. In this struggle we are not to oppose anybody, we are not to abuse anybody. If the opponent abuses us, we have to tolerate it. If he gives a blow to us with a stick, we have to bear it without giving a blow in return.

[1] After his return from Motihari, Gandhiji visited Khandhali, a village in Matar taluka, and addressed a public meeting on the significance of satyagraha.

Secondly, a satyagrahi has to be fearless. He has only to perform his duty. You know that so long as we stick to truth, we remain absolutely free from fear. You will always get protection if your dealings will be straightforward. When we are in the wrong, we feel very nervous about us. Those gentlemen who have committed the crime[1] have run away from the village. But you have not run away in the struggle of satyagraha. Always stick to truth; never be mischievous. A satyagrahi will always welcome imprisonment or a warrant, if he has committed a crime. Even if he has not committed it, he should welcome it. What if it is not committed and yet it be proved in Court? The Government has authority over this body, not over the soul. The soul can be conquered through love. A satyagrahi understands this and, therefore, whether he has committed a crime or not, he remains fearless. The gentleman who has removed the cattle unlawfully, will, I hope, admit his mistake and boldly say that he will undergo any punishment that may be ordered for him. Only thus shall you be elevated.

It is no theft if we do not allow our goods to go into the hands of Government officers. So long as they have not fallen in their hands, you can take them to another village, you can bury them, you can remove your cattle and take them anywhere you like. But no sooner are they attached, either by a horde of Government officials or by any one of them, we should not even touch them. We are not going to help Government in attachments, we do not protect our cattle for them, but as soon as any Government officer attaches our buffalo, we have no right to take it back. Brothers and sisters, I appeal to you to act accordingly. It is not our business to speak insolently to officers or to let loose our cattle when they come to us.

The Collector told me that the *raiyats* are very gracefully acting in the struggle, but such tricks as are played by some Khandhali people mar the beauty of the struggle. I beg of you not to do so again. Real bravery lies in receiving rather than in giving blows. Yesterday, I was reading my *Gita*. Therein I saw that one of the characteristics of a Kshatriya was '*apalayanam*'! It means that in face of danger a Kshatriya does not fall back, but, on the contrary, sticks to his post. If our Government will not fight with the Germans as it does now, if our soldiers go and stand before them weaponless and will not use explosives and say, "We will die

[1] This consisted in letting loose the buffaloes attached by revenue officials.

of your blows", then, I am sure our Government will win the war at once. But such an action requires *samskar* and India possesses most of it. The vegetables that grow in India will not grow properly in England. The seeds of *samskar* will flourish in India. Pure bravery lies in the power of endurance. It is real satyagraha. It is mean to run away in face of danger.

Then he appealed to the gentleman who had committed the crime to admit it and to undergo the punishment that the law might inflict on him. He then asked the *raiyats* to act cautiously but courageously and requested them to be hospitable towards Government officers. Finally he said that they had already attained success in their struggle, and congratulated them on their great pluck and courage.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-6-1918

284. LETTER TO J. CRERAR

SABARMATI,
May 30, 1918

DEAR MR. CRERAR[1],

I have just received Mr. Maffey's letter in which he refers me to His Excellency the Governor regarding the offer of my services which I made immediately after the Conference at Delhi.[2] From Mr. Maffey's letter I gather that he sent extracts from the correspondence between him and me to His Excellency. Will you kindly let me know His Excellency's wishes regarding my offer and the suggestions made in my letter to Mr. Maffey in so far as they refer to Kaira?[3]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

India Office Judicial and Public Records: 3412/18

[1] James Crerar, Secretary to the Governor of Bombay

[2] *Vide* "Letter to J. L. Maffey", 30-4-1918.

[3] Acknowledging this letter, Crerar wrote in his reply of June 1: "His Excellency will cordially welcome your co-operation, which he hopes will be directed more particularly to the encouragement of recruiting in the Northern Division, though there will be a wide field for effort in regard to the development of resources and in other directions. Government are at present engaged in working out a scheme for giving effect to the resolution of the Delhi Conference and these measures will be considered at the Conference to be held in Bombay on June 10th. His Excellency hopes that you will be able to attend the Conference and that he will have an opportunity of seeing you personally

285. LETTER TO MAHATMA MUNSHIRAM

SABARMATI,
Vaishakh Vad 5 [May 30, 1918]

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I have your affectionate and moving letter. I am late in answering it for lack of time. [Only the other day] in Delhi I was saying to Chi. Indra, "Has Mahatmaji forgotten me?" Two or three days later I got your letter. I was so happy. The land of the Kheda district ryots that had been attached has been given back. They will have little pecuniary loss now. They have gained much strength from this struggle.

Your letter gives me strength. When funds for my work run low, I shall certainly remember you.

I hope you have some relief from your pain. May God keep you.

All the members of the Ashram are looking forward to your visit. We shall all become impatient if you exceed the time limit.

All the Ashramites send you their *namaskars*.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2207

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at that time. As suggested in your letter of April 30th to Mr. Maffey, he will be glad, when the organizations which will, it is hoped, result from the Conference, have been set on foot, to indicate in more detail the directions in which your services can be most profitably utilized. As regards the revenue situation in Kaira, His Excellency considers that this, like all other questions of internal administration, must be dealt with separately on its merits, and that there should be no confusion of issues in regard to the great and urgent purposes of the Conference, but a whole-hearted and united effort without distinction of race, class or creed. He feels sure that you will concur in this view and by your example and influence support his endeavour to secure the most complete unanimity and co-operation which the present grave crisis requires."

286. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

AHMEDABAD,
May, 1918[1]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

The Government is fighting a war. It is in difficulties. We, that is to say, the people, want swaraj through its co-operation. We cannot have swaraj until we have made ourselves fit for it. One aspect of this fitness is surely that we should share its burdens. Our object in running the Ashram is to strengthen the character of the inmates. Is it not, then, the duty of the Ashram to offer its help? The end of the war will see us better qualified [for swaraj]. I think we young people should go. One of us will stay behind with the children. Let us know, soon, what you think of this.

Blessings from
BAPU

PS. If we go, we take others as well.

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C.W. 5731. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

287. LETTER TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"[2]

SABARMATI,
June 2, 1918

THE EDITOR
THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE

SIR,

I offer no apology for seeking the hospitality of your columns for the enclosed extracts from *Indian Opinion.* They deal with the well-being of over two lakhs of emigrants from India. Mr. Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia, the esteemed President of the British Indian Association of Johannesburg, has sent from that place the following cablegram regarding one of the matters referred to in the extracts:

[1] The day on which this letter was written is not known.

[2] This was published under the caption, "Anti-Indian Legislation in South Africa". The letter appears to have been released generally to the Press.

> Mass meeting, fifth, strongly protested section nineteen Railway Regulations. Resolved cable supporters India. Regulations impose statutory colour bar in regard to issue of tickets, placing in, and removing from compartments, occupation of places on station platforms, empower minor officials remove without assigning reason. Please make suitable representation appropriate quarters. Community unanimous assert rights unless relief sought granted.

Mr. Cachalia was one of the staunchest workers during the passive resistance campaign that raged for eight years in South Africa. During that campaign, he reduced himself to poverty, and accepted imprisonment for the sake of India's honour. One can, therefore, easily understand what is meant by the words "Community unanimous assert rights unless relief sought granted." It is not a threat, it is the burning cry of distress felt by a community whose self-respect has been injured.

It is evident that the white people of South Africa have not been visibly impressed by the war which is claimed to be waged for the protection of the ryots or weaker or minor nationalities. Their prejudice against colour is not restrained even by the fact that local Indians have raised a volunteer bearer corps which is gallantly serving in East Africa with the column that was taken to East Africa by General Smuts.

The problem is difficult—it is complex. Prejudices cannot be removed by legislation. They will yield only to patient toil and education. But what of the Union Government? It is feeding the prejudice by legalizing it. Indians would have been content if the popular prejudice had been left to work itself out, care being taken to guard against violence on either side. Indians of South Africa could not complain even against a boycott on the part of the whites. It is there already. In social life, they are completely ostracized. They feel the ostracism, but they silently bear it. But the situation alters when the Government steps in and gives legal recognition to the anti-colour campaign. It is impossible for the Indian settlers to submit to an insulting restraint upon their movements. They will not allow booking clerks to decide as to whether they are becomingly dressed. They cannot allow a platform inspector to restrict them to a reserved part of the platform. They will not, as if they were ticket-of-leave men, produce their certificates in order to secure railway tickets.

The pendency of the war cannot be used as an effective shield to cover fresh wrongs and insults. The plucky custodians of India's honour are doing their share in South Africa. We are here bound

to help them. Meetings throughout India should inform the white inhabitants of South Africa that India resents their treatment of her sons. They should call upon the Government of India and the Imperial Government to secure effective protection for our countrymen in South Africa. I hope that Englishmen in India will not be behindhand in lending their valuable support to the movement to redress the wrong.

Mr. Cachalia's cable is silent on the grievance disclosed in the second batch of extracts. It is not less serious. In its effect it is far more deadly. But the community is hoping to right the wrong by an appeal to the highest legal tribunal in the Union. But really the question is above that tribunal. Let me state it in a sentence. A reactionary Attorney-General has obtained a ruling from the Natal Supreme Court to the effect that subjects of 'Native States' are aliens and not British subjects and are, therefore, not entitled to its protection so far as appeals under a particular section of the Immigrants' Restriction Act are concerned. Thus, if the local Court's ruling is correct, thousands of Indians settled in South Africa will be deprived of the security of residence in South Africa, for which they fought for eight years and which they thought they had won. At least a quarter of the Indian settlers of South Africa are subjects of the Baroda and Kathiawad States. If any law considers them as aliens, surely it has to be altered. It is an insult to the States and their subjects to treat the latter as aliens.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 7-6-1918; also, *Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*

288. LETTER TO SIR GEORGE BARNES

SABARMATI,
June 2, 1918

DEAR SIR GEORGE BARNES,

I believe matters affecting the status of emigrants to the Colonies fall under your department. If so, I beg to invite your attention to the attached papers.[1]

You will note from the papers that the Union Government is again succumbing to the white prejudice against colour and that

[1] These are not available.

what is claimed to be a war for principles and for the defence of weaker nationalities has produced but little impression upon the whites of South Africa.

The problem, I know, is difficult. Prejudices cannot be removed by legislation. They will yield only to patient toil and education. But what I fear is that the Union Government, instead of holding the scales evenly between conflicting interests, is itself feeding this race prejudice. If my view be correct, it is a question as to how far it can use the protection of the Union Jack in its anti-Imperial course. Might not the Government of India effectively move the Imperial Government to make an energetic protest against this indecent exhibition of pride and race prejudice?

I suppose you are aware that the small Indian colony in South Africa has rendered and is still rendering, as is admitted by all, much useful service during the war. A bearer corps has been serving in East Africa from the time that General Smuts proceeded there.

The papers are divided into two parts. One part deals with the newly framed railway regulations which speak for themselves. It is unthinkable that an Indian should have to confine himself to a reserved portion of a station platform, reserved carriage, a reserved ticket-office, etc., etc., and even then depend for a first or second-class ticket on the caprice of the booking clerk who is authorized to refuse to issue a ticket to an Indian if, in his opinion, the latter is not becomingly dressed.

The second part shows how, by the ill-judged action of the Union Government, Indians, born in Native States and domiciled in South Africa, have been deprived of valuable legal rights. If the Supreme Court's decision is sound, the law is clearly bad and should be altered. If it is unsound, the Union Government should have it set aside by supporting an appeal to the local Privy Council. Thousands of Indians from the Baroda State have settled in South Africa for years. The Government must have known when they resisted the application of the aggrieved party that they ran the risk of endangering the just rights of Indians who are, to all intents and purposes, British subjects.

I do hope you will set the cable in motion and take the necessary steps to undo the wrong referred to in the papers herewith presented.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

N. A. I.: Commerce and Industry: June 1918: No. 5

289. SPEECH AT UTTARSANDA[1]

June 3, 1918

You have heard the order issued by the Mamlatdar. The order is made as a result of our consultation. A few days back, when I had an interview with the Collector, I had made suggestions to that effect. I told him that if he would act up to my suggestions, the struggle would soon terminate. Such an order has now been issued by the Mamlatdar. It was the first condition of our struggle that the day the assessment dues of the poor were suspended, those who can afford to pay shall at once pay up the revenue. In the beginning, Government was obstinate enough to say that it could not be done. Government said that the assessment that was fixed by them must be paid up at the proper time. The Mamlatdar has issued an order to the effect that those of you who can afford to pay up the assessment should pay it up and those who are really unable to pay will get suspension. Thus the Government will get the revenue; the people will preserve their self-respect and they will also be true to their vow. We must thank the Mamlatdar for this kind order, but how? By understanding the true significance of the order, i.e., by paying up your dues without any hesitation. Those of you who are able to pay the assessment, must pay it up today or tomorrow, and you must make a list of those who are not able to pay. You must convince your Talati that they are really poor. Then the Mamlatdar will issue an order for the suspension of their revenue. I have to make[2] . . . amongst you. It is this : Do not put down those who are able to pay the assessment as poor. Make a list of those only who, if they paid, would have to borrow money from the *sahukar*[3] at an abnormal rate of interest, or of those who would have to sell their cattle or ornaments. The smaller the list of such persons, the greater will

[1] On his return from Bihar, Gandhiji, accompanied by V. J. Patel, visited Uttarsanda, a village three miles distant from Nadiad. The Mamlatdar's order, to the effect that the rich agriculturists of the village should pay up their dues and the poor *khatedars* would be given a suspension of the assessment till the next year, was read out by the *talati*. Gandhiji then addressed the gathering.

[2] Some words are missing here.

[3] Money-lender

be our credit. The world will laugh at those who are able and who ought to pay according to their vow and yet would not pay. And we must see that we are not thus ridiculed. We must not wish to misuse the order of the Mamlatdar saheb. If you will act according to my advice, I am sure, your vow will be a great gain for you, and you will be respected by others. We must act with a clean conscience. How bitterly did we feel when we were told that the Government was right and that we were wrong? Now the Government say that they leave it to us whether to pay the revenue or not. So our duty is two-fold. Those who are able to pay the revenue must pay it up at once. If they do not pay up, we must bring our influence to bear upon them. And, secondly, you must make a list of the poor *khatedars* and after making it, pay up your assessment. Ont he 10th June, there is a War Conference in Bombay. And I hope such orders as are given in this village will also be issued in other villages and I shall be able to tell the Governor that our struggle is over.[1]

The Bombay Chronicle, 5-6-1918

290. SPEECH AT NAVAGAM

June 3, 1918

I am not well and shall not, therefore, speak long. I must say, though, that the people of Navagam and Nayaka have shown great courage and done good work. Some persons at Navali and Khandhali broke all bounds. They set free the buffaloes which had been attached and led them back. They also rubbed the officer's beds with *kavach*. This is not satyagraha but *duragraha*. Our pledge was only to the effect that we would not pay. Officers believe that they have come among us from the heavens. The idea behind our struggle is to make everyone see that being an officer does not mean anything in special. You have had to pay *chothai*, but we shall have to get the amount back; no harm will follow, however, if we do not succeed. The people of Kheda have earned much and learnt much. If you have had to pay *chothai* as a price for all this, it is not much that you have suffered. We were

[1] It appears that Gandhiji wrote to the Collector that, if an order on the lines of that issued by the Mamlatdar could be published and made applicable to the whole district and the *chothai* and other fines withdrawn, the struggle would cease. On the Collector acting on Gandhiji's suggestion, the satyagraha came to an end.

fighting for our pledge. Every effort will be made to see that the *chothai* is refunded. If we remain courteous and truthful, it will be possible to appeal to the Government for its refund. Because people refuse to pay land revenue despite their having to pay *chothai*, they come to be better respected and truth is held in greater honour. The Government seems to have changed its mind about confiscating lands. If it had carried out its idea, it would have utterly disgraced itself and lost people's regard. In view of the people's strength, any attempt at confiscation of lands would have weakened the Government. Naked injustice cannot command much strength.

[From Gujarati]
Prajabandhu, 9-6-1918

291. LETTER TO PEOPLE OF KHEDA[1]

SATYAGRAHA CAMP,
NADIAD,
June 6 [*1918*]

TO
THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF
KAIRA DISTRICT

The struggle that the people of the district of Kaira entered upon on the 22nd of March last, has come to an end. The people took the following vow on that day.[2]

The meaning of this vow is that the Government suspending collection of the revenue from the poor, the well-to-do should pay the assessment due from them. The Mamlatdar of Nadiad at Uttersanda, on the 3rd of June issued such orders, whereupon the people of Uttersanda, who could afford, were advised to pay up. Payments have already commenced there.

On the foregoing order having been passed at Uttersanda a letter was addressed to the Collector[3] stating that if orders like the one in Uttersanda were passed everywhere the struggle would come to an end, and it would be possible to inform His Excellency the

[1] This was issued in Gujarati as a manifesto jointly by Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai Patel, and the English version was published in *Young India* under the caption, "An End without Grace". It was also published in other English newspapers.

[2] For the text of the pledge, which is not reproduced here, *vide* "The Pledge", 22-3-1918.

[3] This letter is not available.

Governor on the 10th instant—the day of the sitting of the Provincial War Conference—that the domestic difference in Kaira was settled. The Collector has replied to the effect that the order like the one in Uttersanda is applicable to the whole district. Thus the people's prayer has at last been granted. The Collector has also stated in reply to a query about *chothai* orders that the orders will not be enforced against those who may voluntarily pay up. Our thanks are due to the Collector for this concession.

We are obliged to say with sorrow that although the struggle has come to an end it is an end without grace. It lacks dignity. The above orders have not been passed either with generosity or with the heart in them. It very much looks as if the orders have been passed with the greatest reluctance. The Collector says :

> Orders were issued to all mamlatdars on the 25th April that no pressure should be put on those unable to pay. Their attention was again drawn to these orders in a proper circular issued by me on the 22nd of May and to ensure that proper effect was given to them the mamlatdars were advised to divide the defaulters in each village into two classes, those who could pay and those who were unable to pay on account of poverty.

If this was so, why were these orders not published to the people? Had they known them on the 25th April what sufferings would they not have been saved from! The expenses that were unnecessarily incurred by the Government in engaging the officials of the district in effecting executions would have been saved. Wherever the assessment was uncollected the people lived with their lives in their hands. They have lived away from their homes to avoid attachments. They have not had even enough food. The women have suffered what they ought not to have. At times, they have been obliged to put up with insults from insolent Circle Inspectors, and to helplessly watch their milch buffaloes being taken away from them. They have paid *chothai* fines and, had they known the foregoing orders, they would have been saved all the miseries. The officials knew that this relief for the poor was the crux of the struggle. The Commissioner would not even look at this difficulty. Many letters were addressed to him but he remained unbending. He said, "Individual relief cannot be granted, it is not the law." Now the Collector says:

> The orders of April 25, so far as it [*sic*] related to putting pressure on those who were really unable to pay on account of poverty, were merely a restatement of what are publicly known to be the standing orders of Government on that subject.

If this is really true, the people have suffered deliberately and through sheer obstinacy! At the time of going to Delhi, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Commissioner requesting him to grant or to issue orders to the above effect so that the good news could be given to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Commissioner gave no heed to the request.

"We are moved by the sufferings of the people, we perceive our mistake and in order to placate the people we are now prepared to grant individual relief," the officials could have generously said all this and endeared themselves to the people, but they have obstinately avoided this method (of winning them over). And even now relief has been granted in a niggardly manner involuntarily and without admission of any mistake. It is even claimed that what has now been granted is nothing new. And hence we say that there is little grace in the settlement.[1]

The officials have failed to be popular because of their obstinacy, because of their mistaken belief that they should never admit being in the wrong and because of their having made it a fetish that it should never be said of them that they had yielded to anything like popular agitation. It grieves us to offer this criticism. But we have permitted ourselves to do so as their friends.

But though the official attitude is thus unsatisfactory, our prayer has been granted and it is our duty to accept the concession with thankfulness. Now, there is only 8 per cent of the assessment remaining unpaid. It was a point of honour with us till now to refuse payment. Conditions having materially altered it is a point of honour for a satyagrahi to pay up the assessment. Those who can afford should pay without causing the Government the slightest trouble and thus show that where there is no conflict between the dictates of conscience and those of man-made law, they are second to none in obeying the law of the land. A satyagrahi sometimes appears momentarily to disobey laws and the constituted authority, only to prove in the end his regard for both.

In making a list of those who are unable to pay we should apply a test so rigid that no one can challenge our findings. Those whose incapacity for payment is at all in doubt should consider it their duty to pay. The final decision as to the incapacity for payment will rest with the authorities, but we believe that the judgment of the people will have its full weight.

By their courage the people of Kaira have drawn the attention of the whole of India. During the last six months they have had

[1] This paragraph is available only in the English version.

full taste of the fruits of observing truth, fearlessness, unity, determination and self-sacrifice. We hope that they will still further cultivate these great qualities, will move forward on the path of progress, and shed lustre on the name of the Motherland. It is our firm belief that the people of Kaira have truly served their own cause, as well as the cause of swaraj and the Empire.

May God bless you!

We remain,
Always in your service,
M. K. GANDHI
VALLABHBHAI J. PATEL

Young India, 12-6-1918

292. SPEECH AT NADIAD[1]

June 8, 1918

In the Court of the Collector of Nadiad, acting as District Magistrate, Mr. Mohanlal Pandya and five others from Navagam were charged on June 8, 1918, with the theft of onions from a field.[2] The accused asserted that they honestly believed that there was nothing illegal in their action.

Gandhiji too said in his evidence that the sole responsibility for the action lay with him, and it was he who had advised the accused to remove the onions. If it was an offence to have removed them, justice required that the sentence should be passed against him. After the case was over,[3] Mahatmaji addressed a large gathering of people outside the compound of the court. [He said:]

Two feelings are uppermost in my heart just now: one of them fills me with gladness, the other with pain. I am glad because the people of Kaira, true satyagrahis that they are, got this opportunity of going to jail. My doubt whether the agriculturists of Kaira would be ready to go to jail has been removed. I am pained because though British officers are good men generally, some of them show want of generosity and vision. The Collector, having awarded a sentence of imprisonment, is welcome to think of jail as

[1] This has been collated with a Gujarati report in *Kheda Satyagraha*.

[2] The field had been declared forfeited by Government order, but Gandhiji had pointed out to the Collector that, as the survey number of the field was not stated in the notice of forfeiture, it could not be regarded as forfeited. He had advised the collection of the onion crop on the field in view of the imminent monsoon. *Vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. XXIV.

[3] Two of the accused were sentenced to ten days' imprisonment and the rest to twenty days' imprisonment each.

degrading and in the nature of a terrible hardship; it is nothing of the kind to us. In spite of this, the experience that the people have got is, indeed, splendid. So long as we do not learn how to endure jail-sufferings and do not perceive the true meaning and lesson of jail-pilgrimage, we do not understand the real meaning of satyagraha. This is the fittest opportunity for all to understand it and we should feel sorry that we are not so fortunate as our brethren who went to jail. I tried my utmost to go to jail. I said that the responsibility from the beginning to the end was solely mine. Bhulabhai[1] had acted after full consideration. If there is any mistake it is mine, and yet I do not feel I am at all in the wrong. I got the case transferred to the Collector with great effort. This was a test case. I had previously informed the Collector that I was not going to appeal from his judgment; and I am still of the same mind. The Court's finding is unjust and the sentence harsh. One cannot expect a man occupying the chair of a judge to be a satyagrahi, for law does not recognize satyagraha. This is a case in which we are bound to succeed if we go in appeal. We have lost the case not because Vallabhbhai or myself did not cross-examine any witness. Any impartial judge with legal knowledge could say that the facts do not constitute any offence. In spite of that, we are not going to appeal. A satyagrahi cannot do that. For him, the best way is to go to jail. I would have been more glad if the sentence had been even more severe. The Collector has ordered the onions to be confiscated. If the Government can dare pocket the onions, let them do. But what I want to tell the many Navagam friends present here is that the revenue arrears of Bhulabhai, Rs. 94/-, must be paid up to the Mamlatdar by tomorrow. We have to respect the settlement. I am going to say the same in the district meeting at Nadiad.

This incident may possibly create bitterness but, if we are large-hearted enough to forget it, the Government will ever remain sorry for its breach of promise. The Collector has acted in anger. Punishment was called for, he thought, for their digging up the onions despite his orders to the contrary. If he had quietly thought over the case and studied the law a little more carefully, he would have seen that there was no offence in the act. If we mean to educate the officers, we must act in this manner again and again; and then they will understand that there cannot be any punishment for such a heroic people, that they deserve a loving handshake. If we want to win over officers, we should be

[1] The owner of the onion field

honest and courteous in our dealings with them. We may never bow down to blind authority but, if necessary, remove onions and go to jail a thousand times.

My brothers of Navagam, consider this opportunity to be a blessed one. Five friends from your town have gone to jail with a pure and bold heart, and for that we shall all congratulate them. As Mohanlal Pandya is with them, I have no anxiety for the rest. He it was who took the lead in this struggle and this is, therefore, a golden opportunity for him. This is not the first time when I have advised against an appeal. In South Africa, when thousands went to jail, I never appealed. There can be no appeal when we wish to go to jail by way of *tapascharya*. Perhaps the Kaira people have not risen so high. But if they have, I would advise them not to offer any defence and to allow the Court to do what it pleases. There are two or three other cases pending in the district. I advise you not to defend yourselves but to suffer imprisonment. There is so much to be learnt in that; and it is my firm belief that we can advance the country by acting in this manner.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-6-1918

293. LETTER TO L. ROBERTSON

BOMBAY,
June 9, 1918

L. ROBERTSON, ESQ.
CHIEF SECRETARY
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

DEAR MR. ROBERTSON,

Your telegram No. 4630[1] was received by me at Nadiad only yesterday evening on my return from Kaira. Before I undertake to support the resolution given in your telegram I should like to know more fully about it. I should like also to see the scheme.

[1] Dated June 7, 1918, it read: "His Excellency would be glad if you would consent to support at Conference 10th instant the following resolution. Begins. This Conference is of opinion that the manpower and resources of this Presidency should be utilized and developed to the fullest possible extent. With this object in view it recommends that a War Purposes Board be appointed consisting of official and non-official members and that the scheme outlined in the memorandum attached to the agenda be approved and adopted. Ends. The Memorandum referred to will be ready tomorrow and will be sent to your Bombay address, which kindly communicate by telegram."

My address is care of Mr. Rewashankar Jagjiwan, Laburnum Road, Chowpati.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

India Office Judicial and Public Records: 3412/18; also Bombay Government Home Department Special File No. 1788 of 1918

294. LETTER TO L. ROBERTSON

BOMBAY
June 9, 1918

DEAR MR. ROBERTSON,

I am sorry I was away when your note[1] was received. I fee that I should not speak to the resolution. I hope therefore tha His Excellency will excuse me. I observe that my name is included in the man-power committee. I note that men like Mr. Tilal are not included. I fear that my usefulness will be materially curtailed if I could not have the benefit of his co-operation and that o other Home Rulers of his calibre. It is hopeless to expect a trul national response and a national army, unless the Governmen are prepared to trust them to do their duty. I should gladl serve on the man-power committee if these leaders are invited t join it. If additions to the committee can be moved, I would b prepared to move that some of these gentlemen may be include in one or more of these committees.

Yours sincerely,

India Office Judicial and Public Records: 3412/18; also Bombay Government Home Department Special File No. 1788 of 1918

[1] This was a letter dated June 9, which read: "In reply to your letter today, I enclose a copy of the Agenda with Memorandum (except the note recruiting which is in the Press) which explains the scheme. You will see th His Excellency has assumed that you will consent to speak. If you don't wi to do so, would you be so good as to inform me by bearer, so that your nan may be deleted from the Agenda." Gandhiji's decision not to address tl Conference on June 10 appears to have been taken after an interview wi Lokamanya Tilak.

295. LETTER TO LORD WILLINGDON

BOMBAY,
June 11, 1918

DEAR LORD WILLINGDON,

I trust you will not misunderstand this note.

I venture to think that your stopping of Messrs Tilak and Kelkar[1] yesterday was a serious blunder.[2] They had been informed on your behalf that they could offer criticism but they could not move an amendment. Your having stopped them will be resented as an insult to a great and growing party in the country. Your action has made the position of workers delicate and difficult and if Mr. Tilak is an enemy of the Government or of the Empire you have undoubtedly strengthened his hands in the pursuit of his course. But if you had allowed him and Mr. Kelkar to have their say, they would have gone away satisfied and it could have been said that you had given fair play to all. Will you not publicly express your regret for the blunder or send for both of them, expressing your regret to them, and invite their co-operation and discuss their viewpoint? You will lose nothing and you will gain greatly in the estimation of the people, enhance your prestige, increase your capacity for securing help from the people and possibly win over the Home Rule party, and also nip in the bud an agitation that is bound to spring up[3] in the country.

I repeat my request that you will not misunderstand this note, which is prompted by nothing but goodwill.[4]

I remain,
Your faithful friend,
M. K. GANDHI

India Office Judicial and Public Records: 3412/18

[1] Narasimh Chintaman Kelkar; nationalist leader, associate and biographer of Tilak, and editor of *The Mahratta*, Poona

[2] The incident occurred on June 10 at the Bombay Provincial War Conference, over which Lord Willingdon presided.

[3] Eventually this happened; *vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Bombay", 16-6-1918.

[4] Gandhiji received the following reply from Crerar the same day: "His Excellency desires me to acknowledge your letter of today's date, at the Contents of which he cannot refrain from expressing some surprise and disappointment. While he is always ready to recognize legitimate difference of

296. LETTER TO J. CRERAR

BOMBAY,
June 11, 1918

DEAR MR. CRERAR,

Pray convey my thanks to His Excellency for the frank and full reply to my letter of this morning. I am just leaving for Poona to attend the celebration of the Servants of India Society. I return on Thursday and I would like to avail myself of His Excellency's kind offer to see me. Could you please wire to me at Poona City, care of the Society, the time (afternoon) when I could wait on His Excellency if it is at all convenient for him for that day. Meanwhile, I wish to assure His Excellency that my letter was not intended to suggest even a possibility of any change of views or alteration in my offer which I am preparing every moment to reduce to practice.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

India Office Judicial and Public Records: 3412/18

opinion on public matters, he cannot conceive of two opinions on the propriety of admitting a contentious political discussion on a resolution expressing loyalty to His Majesty the King-Emperor. Still less can he understand that any loyal citizen of the Empire should at this juncture desire to attach conditions to his offers of service. Mr. Tilak and some of his friends attach conditions which they know, and everybody knows, to be impossible of fulfilment by His Excellency's Government. The offer of co-operation on such terms only differs from an open refusal to co-operate by its lack of candour. His Excellency is convinced that on reflection you will recognize that these are the only views he can entertain and on which he is bound to act. His Excellency is the more convinced of this in view of the fact that your own offer of your services to the Viceroy, to which he attaches the highest value, was made unconditionally and welcomed by him on that express understanding. He is confident that the different and, as he regards it, the lower view of the responsibilities of a citizen of the Empire which others may entertain will not induce you to modify your own observance of the pledge, which he was so glad to receive from you. I am to add that if you desire to see His Excellency again on this matter, he will be pleased to receive a visit from you."

297. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

BOMBAY,
June 13 [1918]

DEAR MR. NATESAN,

Devdas, my son, will be with you ere this reaches you. I am anxious for him to be with you as a member of your family while he is there. If it is inconvenient for you, you will not hesitate to say so. I do not want him to be with a Gujarati family. He should be with a Tamil family. He has to learn Tamil and teach Hindi. I have sent him in response to the Indian Service League. His ultimate goal is Kumbakonam to which I have promised Devdas. But as the Kumbakonam friends are not ready to receive him before July, I thought he should start with the Indian Service League. I have given Devdas Rs. 30/-. He will have about Rs. 15 with him when he reaches there. When he needs any cash will you please let him have it and debit me with same. I know you do not do it. I would like you to make the commencement with Devdas. Your refusal will compel me to send him cash from here. I cannot allow you each time such occasions arise to bear the burden yourself.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G.N. 2227

298. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

June 16, 1918

It was not without very considerable hesitation that I accepted the invitation to preside over the deliberations of this great and important meeting. We have met in order respectfully to

[1] Gandhiji presided over the meeting which was held in the evening at Shantaram Chawl in Girgaon, in the heart of Bombay city, and was attended by some 12,000 people. The meeting was organized as an anti-Willingdon demonstration to protest against the Governor's provocative statements, at the Bombay Provincial War Conference, regarding Home Rule League leaders. The meeting adopted two resolutions. The day was observed as 'Home Rule Day'.

protest against His Excellency Lord Willingdon's conduct in the chair at the War Conference that met in the Town Hall on the 10th instant. I entertain high regard for Lord Willingdon. Of all the Governors in India, probably Lord Willingdon is the most popular. He is known to hold liberal views regarding our aspirations. It is, therefore, difficult for me to contemplate the proceedings of this meeting without sorrow, but I feel that I may not allow personal regard to interfere with the performance of an obvious duty, no matter how painful it may be. The duty is plain. Lord Willingdon convened the Conference, deliberately invited the prominent and leading members of the Home Rule Leagues. They, not wishing to court insult on the one hand, and on the other, desiring to give ample previous notice to His Excellency of their intention to plead their views before the Conference, asked for information about the programme of the Conference. Lord Willingdon had before him the experience of the Delhi Conference[1]. He knew that the Home Rule League members had the first scope given them for discussion during the sittings of the Committees that were then formed. He knew that many members of that Conference had delivered political speeches at its first sitting. With all this knowledge in his possession, now mark what happened at the Conference. In his opening remarks, he delivered a deliberate attack upon the Home Rule Leagues. He accused them of constant obstruction. He was not sure of the sincerity of their support. The Conference platform was hardly the platform for such remarks. If he did not want their co-operation, he ought not to have invited the members of the Home Rule Leagues. If he desired their co-operation, it was hardly the way to tell them beforehand that he did not trust them. He ought to have remembered that Home Rule Leaguers gave material assistance in one way. Their organ, the *Chronicle*, has always urged upon the people to give all the help they can. I venture to suggest to His Excellency that his aspersion upon the Leagues was, at the very least, a tactical blunder. But this was not enough. He wrote in reply to Mr. Kelkar's inquiry as follows:

> A certain number of speakers will be invited beforehand to move, second and support the resolutions to be laid before the Conference. After these speakers have concluded their remarks, an open discussion will follow.
>
> The resolutions laid before the Conference will be framed to give effect to the resolutions of the Delhi Conference and will be two in

[1] The Viceroy's War Conference held in Delhi on April 27-29

number, the first in general terms and the second making specific proposals. Formal amendments will not be admitted, but any criticism or suggestions which speakers may make in the course of discussion will receive careful consideration of Government.

There is no reservation here about political discussion. Mr. Tilak and Mr. Kelkar together with others sent in their names as speakers. In due course, Mr. Tilak rose to speak and hardly had he uttered three sentences, two of which consisted of an absolute declaration of loyalty, when he was stopped on the ground that he was speaking politics on the loyalty resolution. In vain did Mr. Tilak protest that the loyalty resolution had an addendum to it which entitled him to offer relevant criticism. Mr. Kelkar followed and he shared the same fate with the result that there was immediately a dramatic withdrawal from the Town Hall led by Mr. Tilak.[1] In my humble opinion, His Excellency, in giving the ruling that he did, committed a grave blunder and did a disservice to the cause which he had come to espouse. He offered a gratuitous insult to Messrs Tilak and Kelkar, and thereby, to a great, powerful organization in the country. It is impossible to ignore or insult Mr. Tilak and his followers. Mr. Tilak is an idol of the people. He wields over thousands of men an unrivalled influence, his word is law to them. I have great differences of opinion with him, but I would be untrue to myself if I failed to acknowledge that his burning love of his country, his immense sacrifices and a resolute advocacy of the popular cause have earned for him a place in the politics of India which no other leader has. The insult offered to him, and through him to the Home Rule Leagues, is, therefore, an insult to the nation at large. Whether, therefore, we differ from him in politics or not, it is the duty of us all, who feel that Lord Willingdon's treatment of Messrs Tilak and Kelkar was wrong, to protest against it. I am prepared to admit that it would have been better if Mr. Tilak had risen to speak to the said resolution. It is my special and personal opinion, not shared perhaps by any one else, that it would have been better still if he had preserved dignified silence; but, in my opinion, he had a right to speak to the loyalty resolution and offer criticism. I must dissent from the view that a loyalty resolution debars a free expression of one's sentiments. That loyalty must, indeed, be skin-deep which requires a wall of protection against criticism. I hold

[1] Along with Tilak, Gandhiji, Jinnah, B. G. Horniman, then editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, N. C. Kelkar and R. P. Karandikar left the Conference Hall.

it to be perfectly consistent with my loyalty to the King to tell him that things are done in his name which ought not to be done. My declaration of loyalty will sound all the truer for the warning and I think that among the many services rendered by the Home Rule Leagues, special mention deserves to be made of their having emboldened the people to speak out their minds : and I doubt not that if they but do their duty to the fullest extent, they would place India's loyalty above suspicion. For, with a true Home Ruler it must be an article of faith that the Empire must be saved; for, in its safety lies the fruition of his fondest hopes. Not to help the Empire is to commit national suicide. How can we wish harm to our would-be partner without hurting ourselves?

So, whilst I fully share the opinion of the members of the Home Rule Leagues that we must protect national honour by asking for an expression of regret for His Excellency's *faux pas*, we must, at the same time, redouble our efforts to help the authorities in the prosecution of the war. We must not be angered by Lord Willingdon's mistake into taking a false step ourselves. We have too much at stake; we want Home Rule and we want [it] in the quickest time possible, and I wish I could still persuade the country to accept my view that absolutely unconditional and whole-hearted co-operation with the Government on the part of educated India will bring us within sight of our goal as nothing else will. I do not for a single minute share the distrust of my countrymen that, like so many other hopes of ours, this one of swaraj is also doomed to disappointment. Not that the Government here, as also the Imperial Government, have done nothing to shake our trust; only, my trust rests not in their change of policy, but it rests upon the solid foundation of our own struggle. Surely it must be easy for anyone to see that, if we succeed in controlling the development of manpower and resources, we will have attained to an irresistible position and power; for, in my humble plan for the attainment of Home Rule, I aspire to nothing less than a complete control over these two departments. The Government seek our co-operation herein, let us take them at their word. They cannot reject help willingly and honestly offered. Our supplying recruits means in spirit, though not in law, yet a national army instead of a hired army. I have never been able to claim for ourselves any credit for the thousands who have been recruited by the official department. These recruits have gone not as patriots, not for the sake of the country, not for the Empire but for the money and other inducements held out to them. Recruits whom we would raise would be Home Rulers. They would go to fight for the Empire;

but they would so fight because they aspire to become partners in it. They would not consider it with Sir Narayan[1] a humiliation to fight for their hearths and their homes, but they would consider it a perfectly honourable ambition to gain freedom for their country by fighting for the Empire.

I hope that H.E. will see his way to concede to the wishes of this great meeting; but if he fails today, if the Viceroy also fails, I for one shall not despair of H.E. voluntarily apologizing to the Home Rule Leaguers in the near future. For I know they mean to co-operate in the prosecution of war. And when he sees this, he will realize his mistake and, like a gentleman that he is, will offer apology. Difficulties there are, many of the Government's creation. Thus, indifference to popular opinion, their rejection of our advice tendered for the attainment of the common aim, namely gaining of recruits, have made our task well-nigh impossible of fulfilment; but our duty is clear. Undaunted by these and many other difficulties, we should press forward and bear down their indifference to our opinion by demonstrating in practice the harm that they do to the Empire by their persistent defiance of popular will. I, therefore, regard the second resolution, that will be placed before you, not in any sense as so many conditions of our co-operation, but as a statement of the difficulties lying in our path. There are only two ways whereby we can attain our goal, co-operation or obstruction. Under the British Constitution, obstruction is a perfectly legitimate and well-known method for securing rights; but obstruction at a crisis like the one facing the Empire can only end in enraging the Government who are responsible for the conduct of the war; whereas, co-operation will not only disarm their opposition but it will give us a strength and a confidence which cannot but take us to our goal. The occasion for which we have met is a unique one; we are asking a popular Governor to put himself right with us by repenting of his mistakes; we are also providing that, if we fail to get redress, we pledge ourselves not to attend any public meeting over whose deliberations Lord Willingdon may preside in future. This is a serious step, but, I think, warranted by events that have taken place. The justice of our step will be proved by our future conduct, i.e., by disproving H.E.'s charges by a determined effort at co-operation.

I observe that today is the Home Rule Day anniversary. It is, or ought to be, a solemn day for Home Rule Leaguers. Lord Willingdon has presented them with the expression 'Home Rule

[1] Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar

Leaguers' distinguished from 'Home Rulers'. I cannot conceive the existence of an Indian who is not a Home Ruler; but there are millions like myself who are not Home Rule Leaguers. Although I am not a member of any Home Rule League, I wish to pay on this auspicious day my humble tribute to numerous Home Rule Leaguers whose association I have ever sought in my work and which has been extended to me ungrudgingly. I have found many of them to be capable of any sacrifice for the sake of the Motherland. Some of them, I have noticed, are extremely capable young men, for I am not thinking, in offering my tribute, of the front-rank leaders of the movement. I am simply thinking of the rank and file with whom it has been my privilege to work. I wish to testify to their loyalty to the British Constitution and the British connection, and also testify to their impatience of bureaucratic control. They show an eminent degree of all the virtues and vices of youth. Their language is sometimes strong, sometimes even wild, not parliamentary. They betray excessive zeal. Men of age and experience, we often may find occasions to stand aghast at some of their actions; but their hearts are strong and pure. They have succeeded to a certain extent in clearing the atmosphere of cant and humbug. Their truth has sometimes hurt, but I must say that although, when the Leagues were first established, I looked upon them with scepticism and even doubted their usefulness, a careful examination of their work has convinced me that the Leagues have supplied a felt want. They have put light into the people. They have filled them with hope and courage; and, had the authorities not misunderstood them, I am certain they could have availed themselves of this inexhaustible reservoir of man-power. They need not be told that the members of the Leagues realize their own responsibility, and come forward with it. It was hardly to be expected of high-souled youths who had all along chaffed under bureaucratic domination.

It was the duty of the authorities who, being more experienced, should have known better, to have made the Home Rule Leaguers their own. Whatsoever the error may be, let the Home Rule Leaguers, having now realized it, correct it. Let them not lose faith in even the bureaucrats. Want of faith is a betrayal of weakness. Bureaucracy is bad, it is doomed, but all bureaucrats are not bad. Our triumph will be in reforming the bureaucrats. If we need not say "Jo-hukum" and fall down at their feet, we may not shame them or insult them. Let us meet the tricks of the bureaucracy with the greatest frankness and honesty. That we should return good for evil was not said of angels but of men. The manliest

course is never to deviate by a hair's breadth from the straight and narrow path; and Home Rule Leaguers are nothing if they cannot be manly. During the coming year of probation, let the Home Rule Leaguers discharge themselves as efficiently in the work of construction as they have in the work of destruction and they will make this a day for universal celebration throughout the length and breadth of India.

The Bombay Chronicle, 17-6-1918

299. LETTER TO SHANKARLAL BANKER

June 16, 1918

I have your letter. Of course I would not ask you to leave the League[1] and work with me; on the contrary, I wish that you remain in the League and guide its policy too in the right direction. You are satisfied with the present position. To me, it seems dangerous. If the League refuses to help in recruitment, it will be going against the Bombay resolution.[2] If all the members of the League believed that it was not permissible to anyone to help in recruitment while being in the League, the Bombay resolutions should not have been passed and I should not have been given the chairmanship of the meeting. When the League accepted me, it indicated that any of its members who desired to help in recruitment could do so.

My faith is not merely in the British people, but in human nature as such. Every human being has some truth in him. It is our duty to nurse this. If, in the process, the person concerned plays foul, it is he and not we who will suffer the consequences.

You may be sure people are not so bad as you think.

I will explain this further when we meet. In my view, it is the duty of members of the League all over India to plunge into this work. Simultaneously, you may carry on any agitation that you want to against the misdeeds of the Government. By following this course, you will have served both ends. The Home Rule League will suffer a serious set-back if it does nothing to help recruitment. . .[3]

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] The Home Rule League
[2] *Vide* the following item.
[3] The omission is in the source.

300. CABLE TO BRITISH PRIME MINISTER[1]

BOMBAY,
[After *June 16, 1918*]

I HAVE THE HONOUR TO COMMUNICATE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE CITIZENS OF BOMBAY HELD ON THE 16TH JUNE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BOMBAY BRANCHES OF THE HOME RULE LEAGUES.

FIRST RESOLUTION

THAT THIS MEETING OF THE CITIZENS OF BOMBAY PROTESTS AGAINST THE PUBLIC INSULT LEVELLED BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY AGAINST THE MEMBERS OF HOME RULE LEAGUES IN GENERAL BY CHALLENGING THE SINCERITY OF THEIR SUPPORT TO THE EMPIRE BY THUS THROWING A DOUBT ON THEIR LOYALTY TO THE CROWN. MORE ESPECIALLY IT CONDEMNS HIS TREATMENT OF THE HOME RULE LEADERS IN INVITING THEM TO THE WAR CONFERENCE, ATTACKING THEM IN HIS OPENING SPEECH AND DENYING THEM AN OPPORTUNITY OF DEFINING THEIR ATTITUDE AND IT CALLS UPON HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNNOR TO WITHDRAW THE ASPERSIONS CAST AGAINST THE HOME RULE LEAGUES AND ITS MEMBERS AND TO EXPRESS HIS REGRET FOR HIS CONDUCT AND FAILING SUCH WITHDRAWAL THIS MEETING APPEALS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY TO REPUDIATE THE STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY AND DESIRES TO POINT OUT THAT SUCH PROVOCATIVE LANGUAGE IS CALCULATED TO RAISE A BARRIER IN THE WAY OF THE HEARTY CO-OPERATION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT, UNTIL SUCH AMENDS HAVE BEEN MADE, MEMBERS OF THE HOME RULE LEAGUES WILL BE UNABLE

[1] This communication, embodying the resolutions adopted at the public meeting of June 16, was also sent to the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy.

TO TAKE PART IN ANY MEETING IN FUTURE PRESIDED OVER BY LORD WILLINGDON WITHOUT IN ANY WAY PREVENTING THEM FROM DOING THEIR DUTY TO THEIR COUNTRY AND THE EMPIRE AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE.

SECOND RESOLUTION

THAT THIS MEETING IS OF OPINION THAT THE METHODS AND THE MEASURES OF GOVERNMENT FOR UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER AND THE RESOURCES OF INDIA IN WAR ARE NOT SUCH AS TO SECURE THEIR FULLEST POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT IN THAT, FIRST, THERE IS A SPIRIT OF DISTRUST FOR THE PEOPLE RUNNING THROUGHOUT THEIR HANDLING OF THAT GREAT NATIONAL WORK. SECOND, OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF THE RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS FAIL TO SEEK IN SPIRIT OF EQUALITY THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PEOPLE IN PROSECUTION OF THE WAR. THIRD, INTERMINABLE DELAY IS TAKING PLACE IN THE AMENDMENTS OF THE ARMS ACT IN ORDER TO ENABLE THE GENERAL BODY OF PEOPLE TO TAKE AND CARRY ARMS IF THEY SO DESIRE. FOURTH, THE COMMISSION RANKS IN THE INDIAN ARMY ARE NOT YET THROWN OPEN TO THE INDIANS NOR RACIAL BARS AND DISTINCTIONS REMOVED. FIFTH, THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IMPERIAL WAR CONFERENCE AT DELHI FOR ADMITTING INDIANS TO THE EXISTING MILITARY COLLEGES AND FOR ESTABLISHING NEW COLLEGES FORTHWITH HAVE NOT [BEEN] GIVEN EFFECT TO. THIS MEETING IS OF OPINION THAT THOUGH EVERY LOYAL CITIZEN OF INDIA DESIRES WHOLE-HEARTEDLY TO RESPOND TO THE CALL OF THE PREMIER, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE LEADERS TO SECURE FULL AND FREE RESPONSE FROM PEOPLE IN REGARD TO THE MILITARY SERVICES UNLESS THE PRESENT POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IS CHANGED BY REMOVING THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DEFECTS.

M. K. GANDHI
PRESIDENT OF THE MEETING

Young India, 2-10-1918

301. SPEECH AT NADIAD[1]

June 17, 191

In the course of his speech, Mr. Gandhi observed that it was the fir and most important duty of the ryots to assist Government. Full assistance shou be given in order to overthrow the Germans. The English were better thа the Germans. They had come into close contact with the English and th knew each other well, so it was their first duty to assist the English. Son said that they should help only if they were given Home Rule. He believ they could not preserve the country so long as they had no military traditioı In due course they would get Home Rule. By the mere fact of giving assistan they would get it. Half a million men were required from India for acti service during a year, and if they did not come forward to supply these me Government would themselves enlist them and the army so raised will called the Government army. But if the men were supplied by them they shot be called the national army. The same rules and regulations that were here fore in force would apply to the men so raised. Home Rule without milita power was useless, and this was the best opportunity to get it. They shot not, therefore, lose this opportunity. He had had a talk with [Mr.] Til Mrs. Annie Besant, Mr. Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mr. Motilal Nehru this connection, and they were all of opinion that it was a good idea, but th doubted whether the ryots would accept these views. He had faith in ryc Many men died of plague and cholera and so it would not be a hard th to die in the war. He was ready to go to the war if the people would co forward. He was not a member of the Home Rule League. To receive milit training was the stepping-stone to acquire Home Rule, and so each and ev member of the Home Rule League should join. It was rumoured the Indi were placed in the first row and were killed, but he did not believe this. T English were a fighting race and he did not believe that such a people wo remain in the rear and send others to the front. If, however, such a ti came he would himself object, and unless he were shot, he would not allow the men to be so killed. Before appealing to the whole country for the natio army, he had a mind to appeal first to the Kaira people who had becc satyagrahis. Nadiad was an important town in the Kaira District and so had called them together in private. If they agreed with him, the ma would be taken in hand: so they should think well, and then get themse

[1] Forwarding this report to the Government of Bombay, the District Ma trate of Kheda wrote: "On June 17th, Mr. M. K. Gandhi held a small mee of his more immediate followers at Nadiad in connection with recruitment . about 50 persons were present."

enrolled. If he were satisfied, a public meeting would be called in two or three days.

Bombay Government Records, 1918

302. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SABARMATI,
Jeth Sud 10 [June 19, 1918]

BHAI SHRI JAMNALALJI,

I insisted on paying your man the money for the ticket. If I didn't pay, I wouldn't be able to entrust work again without hesitation.

I looked into the building account after coming here. I have received Rs. 28,000. The expenditure already incurred amounts to Rs. 40,000. The balance has been met from the funds ear-marked for the other activities of the Ashram. What I need most at present is money for the construction work. The expenditure will be Rs. one lakh. If you feel like contributing anything, kindly do so.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

This is more important than bearing my travelling expenses.

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand. G. N. 2199

303. SPEECH AT NADIAD[1]

June 21, 1918

SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

I am sorry to see that very few women are present today. What I have to say is meant for both. I have not come here to preach, but to give you what seems to me right advice. This meeting in Nadiad is the first of its kind in Gujarat. It was here that the first meeting for satyagraha was held. We displayed good strength and much capacity for suffering during that struggle. It

[1] The meeting, which inaugurated Gandhiji's recruitment campaign in Gujarat, was held at Moghul Kotiwadi and was attended by about a thousand people.

brought me into close contact with the people. I feel, therefore that in saying what I have to say to the whole of the country, should make a start with this place.

We put up a determined fight against the Government, sai many harsh and bitter things to it. All this was necessary, bu whether or not we had the right to do it, we have now an opportu nity to show. There is no room for vindictiveness in satyagraha I am sure there was none in our struggle. Let us consider whethe it is desirable at all in any circumstances that we should associat ourselves with the Government. I have closely watched its shor comings during our struggle as also on other occasions, and hav pointed them out too. I have had, however, no opportunity at a in India to present its better side. From my personal experienc of dealings with it, I have learnt this at any rate: that we woul do well not to be content with a subordinate position in the Empir It is a characteristic trait of the British that they would tre people who did so as beasts of burden. We can benefit by ou connection with them only if we live as their friends or partner They will protect the honour of their allies and be loyal to the unto death. As a nation, they have some virtues. They lo justice; they have shielded men against oppression. The liber of the individual is very dear to them. Why, then, should we thi of breaking off our connection with them altogether? Everyo needs a friend. Japan, America, England—they are all oblig to maintain friendship with some nation or other. Every count maintains a connection with another with which it is temper mentally allied. India can be no exception to this. We aspire independence, but on this basis. In this context, the examples Australia and Canada are generally cited; we demand a stat like theirs. They enjoy protection and, likewise, help in the defen effort. That is exactly what we want for ourselves. If we thi a status such as this is really worth having, we should do what necessary to achieve it. If [on the contrary] we believe that o connection with the British is harmful to us, the advice I a giving can be of little use. It may even dishonour us, if followe If, however, we want to live as equal partners with the Britis I think my advice will prove invaluable. India cannot stand her own feet. If the British left us, we would not be able to c fend ourselves. We could not protect ourselves against the crimi tribes or stand against an invading foreign army. If anyone blan the British for this terrible state of affairs, he will be quite rig That nation has many such things to answer for. But our task to turn their virtues to account for our uplift.

It is the misfortune of India that she is in no position to make progress without outside help. We ought to get rid of this helplessness of ours. It is essential that the country should come to be entrusted with her defence, that she should become capable of defending her people. We shall not be fit for swaraj till we have acquired the capacity to defend ourselves. That India should always have to depend on the British for her defence—this is her helplessness. To remove this is a sacred duty which we should first attend to.

Only equals can be partners. There can be no partnership between the cat and the mouse, between the ant and the elephant. We look upon the British as the elephant and ourselves as the ant. So long as we do not get rid of this idea, swaraj can have no meaning for us. Any stout fellow can successfully intimidate us. If a Pathan were to come here and start hitting out with the lathi, we would all run away. An overbearing Kabuli, entering a compartment already overcrowded, will get the people to vacate their seats and find a seat though none was vacant before; he will go further and occupy the room for four. People feel helpless before him.

With this cowardly fear in us, how can we be the equals of the British? If I see a *Dhed* and ask him to sit by my side and offer him something to eat, he will shake with fear. He will be my equal only when he feels sufficiently strong in himself to have no fear of me. To describe him as my equal [when he lacks such strength] is like adding insult to injury.[1] We occupy the position of the *Bhangi* in the Empire. Now we have an opportunity to emancipate ourselves from such a state and we can use it in either of two ways—in a spirit of friendliness or that of hostility. If we would follow the latter course, we should not help them with a single man or with a single pie; we should even stop others from helping. We should hope for a defeat of the Allies and fight the British and drive them out. All this, even if desirable, is impossible. Though we, advocates of swaraj, may not help the Government, other sections of the country have been helping it. We have no strength to fight the Government, or anyone else for that matter. It has succeeded in securing help from India to the tune of a million men and crores of rupees. Evidently, therefore, if we now propose to push the British out of India in a spirit of hostility and be *Bhangis* no more, it does not seem likely that we shall in the

[1] The Gujarati, phrase literally means: branding one who has already sustained burns.

foreseeable future succeed in breaking off the British connecti through physical force.

We can, therefore, free ourselves only through a frienc approach. This is not possible unless we render all possible he to the Government at the present juncture. We want to be pa ners in the Empire. If there were no Empire, with whom wou we be partners? Our hopes lie in the survival of the Empire. all means, let us fight its evils. A brother fights the wrongs do by a brother. If one brother seeks to deprive another of right, the latter will resist, but will go all out to help the form in time of difficulty and so prove the fact of their being brothe wiping out, sometimes, even old animosities. There is no reas to believe that we cannot bring about such a result by deali with the British in the right manner. To be sure, we m fight the iniquities of the Empire. Even today we may do if they were to inflict anything afresh. At the same time, should spare no effort in helping it to meet the danger whi threatens it.

Besides, we shall learn military discipline as we help t Empire, gain military experience and acquire the strength defend ourselves. With that strength, we may even fight t Empire, should it play foul with us. It knows this, and, ther fore, it will prove the *bona fides* of the British Government they permit us to enlist. By raising an army now, we shall insuring against future eventualities.

If the British people have the ability to rule, they do n owe it merely to their physical strength. They have the art [government], they have skill and foresight, shrewdness and w dom. They know how to deal with people according to the deserts. They know that, if we help, it will be in expectation getting swaraj. The difference between their point of view a that of some of us is this: we say we will have swaraj first a then fight; they say they will not be coerced, that swaraj will ours if we help. They invite us to examine their history. The Boe got swaraj because they could fight the British. When we can so, they say, we too shall have swaraj.

We can count only on our own military strength. T Indians who are fighting now do not represent our strength b the Government's. If we, who would have swaraj, can tra ourselves to be their equals as soldiers, if we renounce the fe of death, we shall be soldiers in a national army. When that ha pens, there will be no distinction of superior and inferior as be ween the Government and us.

Mr. Montagu's scheme will be announced shortly.[1] Whether the scheme, if we accept it, goes through or the improvements, if any, desired by us are carried out, will depend on us. If, at this juncture, they hear in England that the whole of India has lined up for enlistment, the House of Commons will rejoice at the news and concede all our reasonable demands. Even if it does not, what then? It is they who will have reason to be sorry afterwards. An India trained for fighting will be able to wrest freedom in a moment. But the Government is not so foolish as all that. The British are a nation of heroes. They will recognize heroism. If we but rouse the heroic spirit which has been slumbering in us, we can have everything today. It is, therefore, my request to everyone of you to give up all hesitation and join up. I have no doubt in my mind that, just now, this should be the first and the last plank in the movement carried on by the Home Rule League.[2]

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 7-7-1918

304. *APPEAL FOR ENLISTMENT*

NADIAD,

June 22, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 1[3]

SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF KHEDA DISTRICT:

You have just emerged successful from a glorious satyagraha campaign. You have, in the course of this struggle, given such evidence of fearlessness, tact and other virtues that I venture to advise and urge you to undertake a still greater campaign.

You have successfully demonstrated how you can resist Government with civility, and how you can retain your self-respect without hurting theirs. I now place before you an opportunity of proving that you bear no hostility to Government despite your having given it a strenuous fight.

[1] The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Constitutional Reforms was published on July 8, 1918.

[2] According to a despatch in the Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1918, Gandhiji asked at the end that "no report of the meeting need be sent to the Press" until they were able to secure recruits.

[3] Probably used by Gandhiji for the text of his address at a meeting, this went into wide circulation in the printed form. An English version was also published in the Press, but is not available.

You are all lovers of swaraj; some of you are members the Home Rule League. One meaning of Home Rule is that v should become *partners in the Empire.* Today we are a subje people. We do not enjoy all the rights of Englishmen. We a not today partners in the Empire as are Canada, South Africa ar Australia. We are a dependency. We want the rights of Englis men, and we aspire to be as much partners in the Empire as tl Dominions overseas. We look forward to a time when we mε aspire to the Viceregal office. To bring about such a state things we should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is, tl ability to bear arms and to use them. As long as we have look to Englishmen for our defence, as long as we are not fr from the fear of the military, so long we cannot be regarded equal partners with Englishmen. It behoves us, therefore, learn the use of arms and to acquire the ability to defend ourselve *If we want to learn the use of arms with the greatest possible despatc it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the army.*

There can be no friendship between the brave and the effem nate. We are regarded as a cowardly people. If we want become free from that reproach, we should learn the use of arm

Partnership in the Empire is our definite goal. We shou suffer to the utmost of our ability and even lay down our lives defend the Empire. If the Empire perishes, with it perish ou cherished aspirations.

Hence the easiest and the straightest way to win swaraj is to participa in the defence of the Empire. It is not within our power to giv much money. Moreover, it is not money that will win the wa Only an army inexhaustible in number can do it. That arm India can supply. If the Empire wins mainly with the hel of our army, it is obvious that we would secure the righ we want.

Some will say that, if we do not secure those rights just nov we would be cheated of them afterwards. The strength we emplc in defending the Empire now can secure those rights. Rights wo by making an opportunity of the Empire's weakness are likely t be lost when the Empire regains its strength. We shall not succee in becoming partners in the Empire by trying to embarrass i Embarrassing it in its hour of crisis will not help us to secure th rights which we must win by serving it. To distrust the statesme of the Empire is to distrust our own strength; it is a sign of our ow weakness. We should not depend for our rights on the goodne or the weakness of the statesmen, we should depend on our fitne and our strength.

The Native States are helping the Empire and they are getting their reward. The rich are rendering full financial assistance to the Government and they are likewise getting their reward. The assistance in neither case is rendered conditionally. The sepoys are rendering their services for their salt and for their livelihood. They get their livelihood, and prizes and honours in addition. All these classes are a part of us, but they cannot be regarded as lovers of swaraj, their goal is not swaraj. The help they render is not out of love for the country. If we seek to win swaraj in a spirit of hostility, it may well be that the Imperial statesmen will use these three forces against us and defeat us.

If we want swaraj, it is our duty to help the Empire and we shall undoubtedly get the reward of that help. If our motive is honest, the Government will behave honestly with us. Assuming for a moment that it will not do so, our honesty should make us confident of our success. It is no mark of greatness to be good only with the good. Greatness lies in returning good for evil.

The Government does not give us commissions in the Army, it does not repeal the Arms Act; it does not open schools for military training. How can we then co-operate with it? These are valid objections.

In not granting reforms in these matters, the Government is committing a serious blunder. The British have many acts of goodness to their credit. For these, God's grace be with them. But the heinous sin perpetrated by the British administrators in the name of their people will, if they do not take care betimes, undo the effect of all these acts of goodness. If the worst happens to India, which God forbid, and she passes into the hands of some other nation, India's piteous cry will make England hang her head in shame before the world, and a curse will descend upon her for having emasculated a nation of thirty crores. I believe the statesmen of England have realized this and have taken the warning, but they are unable to alter all of a sudden the situation created by themselves. Every Englishman upon entering India is trained to despise us, to regard himself as our superior and to keep himself aloof from us. They imbibe these ideas from the very atmosphere in which they move. Those at the higher levels of administration try to free themselves and their subordinates from this atmosphere but their effort does not bear immediate fruit. If there were no crisis for the Empire, we should be fighting against this domineering spirit. But to sit back at this crisis, waiting for commissions, etc., is like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. It

may well be that, while we are waiting for commissions, the oppor tunity to help the Empire may slip away.

It is my firm belief that even if the Government desires t prevent us from enlisting in the army and rendering other help b refusing us commissions or by delay in granting them, it is our dut to insist upon joining the army.

The Government at present wants half a million men for th army. They will certainly succeed in raising this number some how. If we supply this number, the credit will be ours, we wi be rendering a service and the reports that we often hear of im proper methods adopted by recruiting agents will become thing of the past. It is no small thing to have the whole work of re cruiting in our hands. If the Government have no trust in us, their intentions are not pure, they would not recruit men through u

The foregoing argument will show that by enlisting in the arm we help the Empire, we qualify ourselves for swaraj, we learn t defend India and to a certain extent regain our lost manhoo

I admit it is because of my faith in the British people that can advise as I am doing. I believe that, though this nation ha done India much harm, it is to our advantage to retain connec tion with it. Their virtues seem to me to outweigh their vice It is painful to remain in subjection to that nation. The Britis have the great vice of depriving a subject nation of its self-respec but they have also the virtue of treating their equals with du respect and of loyalty towards them. We have seen that the have many times helped those groaning under the tyranny of other As their partners, there is much we can receive and muc that we can give and our connection with them based on tha relationship is likely to benefit the world. If such was not m faith and if I thought it desirable to become absolutely indepen dent of that nation, I would not only not advise co-operation bu would on the contrary ask the people to beware, advising them t rebel, and paying the penalty for doing so. We are not in position today to stand on our own feet unaided and alone. believe that our good lies in becoming and remaining equal par ners in the Empire and I have seen it throughout India that a those who demand swaraj are of the same view. I expect fro Kheda and Gujarat not 500 or 700 recruits but thousands. Gujarat wants to save herself from the reproach of effeminacy, sh should be prepared to contribute thousands of sepoys. These mu include the educated classes, the *Patidars*, the *Dharalas*, the *Vaghar* and I hope they all will fight side by side as comrades. Unle the educated classes or the *elite* of the community take the lea

it is idle to expect the other classes to come forward. I hope those among the educated classes who are above the prescribed age but who are able-bodied will be eligible to enlist themselves. Their services will be utilized, if not for actual fighting, for related purposes and for looking after the welfare of the sepoys. I hope also that those who have grown-up sons will not hesitate to send them as recruits. To sacrifice sons in the war ought to be a cause not of pain but of pleasure to brave men. Sacrifice of sons at this hour will be a sacrifice for swaraj.

To the women, my request is that they should not be alarmed by this appeal but should welcome it. It contains the key to their protection and their honour.

There are 600 villages in Kheda district. Every village has on an average a population of over 1,000. If every village gave at least twenty men, Kheda district would be able to raise an army of 12,000 men. The population of the whole district is seven lakhs and this number will then work out at 1.7 per cent, a rate which is lower than the death rate. If we are not prepared to make even this sacrifice for the Empire, for the sake of swaraj, no wonder that we should be regarded unworthy of it. If every village gives at least twenty men, on their return from the war they will be the living bulwarks of their village. If they fall on the battle-field, they will immortalize themselves, their village and their country, and twenty fresh men will follow their example and offer themselves for national defence.

If we mean to do this, we have no time to lose. I desire that the fittest and the strongest in every village should be selected and their names forwarded. I ask this of you, brothers and sisters. To explain things to you and to answer the many questions that may be raised, meetings will be held in important villages. Volunteers will also go round.

Messrs Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel, Barrister-at-law, Krishnalal Narasilal Desai, M.A.LL.B., Indulal Kanhaiyalal Yagnik, B.A.LL.B., Hariprasad Pitambardas Mehta, Manager of the Hitechchhu Press, Pragji Khandubhai Desai, Mohanlal Kameshwar Pandya, B.Ag., Ganesh Vasudeo Mavlankar, M.A.LL.B., Kalidsas Jashkaran Zaveri, B.A.LL.B., Fulchand Bapuji Shah, Gokuldas B. Talati, B.A.LL.B., Shivabhai Bhailal Patel, B.A.LL.B., Raojibhai Manibhai Patel and others are co-operating.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

305. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[NADIA:
Before *June 23, 1918*

As for my offer you know that, in my letter to Maffey,[2] I hav said I should kill neither friend nor foe. Regarding those wh want to fight but will not, either out of cowardice or spite again the British, what is my duty? Must I not say, "If you can follo my path, so much the better, but if you cannot, you ought to giv up cowardice or spite and fight. You cannot teach *ahimsa* to man who cannot kill. You cannot make a dumb man apprecial the beauty and the merit of silence.[3] Although I know that silenc is most excellent, I do not hesitate to take means that would enabl the dumb man to regain his speech. I do not believe in an Government, —but Parliamentary Government is perhaр better than capricious rule. I think it will be clear to you that shall best spread the gospel of ahimsa, or satyagraha by askin the *himsak* (militant) men to work out their *himsa* in the leas offensive manner, and may succeed, in the very act, in makin them realize the better worth of ahimsa. If I have not made th position clear, you should try if you can to come down.[4]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desa

306. LETTER TO REV. F. Z. HODGE

[NADIAD,
June 23, 191

Pray accept my heartfelt thanks for your kind letter. W do regard ourselves as members of the inner circle in your family

[1] C. F. Andrews replied to this letter on June 23.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to J. L. Maffey", 30-4-1918.

[3] Andrews observed in regard to this point: "I do not see the analog of the dumb man in your letter. It seems dangerously near the argument tha the Indian who has forgotten altogether the blood-lust might be encourage to learn it again first and then repudiate it afterwards of his own account."

[4] Andrews wrote back: "At the same time I do agree with you entirel that it is a free India choosing her own path which can give the world th highest example of ahimsa, not the present subjected India. But even then— cannot you conceive of that very freedom being won by moral force only, no by the creation of a standing army to meet the army of occupation."

It was a joy always to be able to pass a few hours with you. I am taking the liberty of sending your letter to Babu Brajkishore for its reference to my co-workers as also for the warning that we may not allow the schools to languish. You know that Dr. Deva, before he left, put up a pucca building in Bhitiharwa. I find it most difficult to secure a lady teacher. But I do not despair of finding one. I would so like you to visit the schools now and then. You should ask Babu Gorakhprasad to find you a conveyance.

Devdas is now in Madras conducting a Hindi class for the Tamils.

The Kaira quarrel was settled some time ago. Did you see my letter[1] announcing the settlement? I am now commencing a recruiting campaign.

Please remember us both to Mrs. Hodge. I hope she has entirely regained her former strength.

I trust the boys will have left off their shyness with me when I next meet them. It is my intention to visit Champaran at least once in three months.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

307. LETTER TO B. G. HORNIMAN

[NADIAD,]
June 23, 1918

I wonder whether I shall succeed in engaging your pen in behalf of my appeal[2] herewith. I shall value it. I need it. I do feel that we shall truly serve the common cause if we help the Government with sepoys and yet give battle on their wrongdoings. The two can go side by side. The stupidity of administrators makes recruiting difficult. That need not dismay us. We ought to do our best. That is how I read the resolutions of the Protest Meetings.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* "Letter to People of Kheda", 6-6-1918.
[2] *Vide* "Appeal for Enlistment", 22-6-1918

308. LETTER TO MRS. WEST

[NADIAD,
June 23, 191

DEAR MRS. WEST,

I was glad to receive your note. I wish you will not worr about your financial affairs. Albert[1] is a brother to me. Nothin can shake my trust in him. If I despaired of Albert, I should hav to despair of the world. I have already written to him.[2] I kno that he has done what was best in the circumstances. I am glac too, that both you and Sam are now able to have suitable educatio for the children. I wonder if Hilda remembers me. I do nc know what has come over Manilal. He had such high regard fo all of you and had so much affection showered on him by yo all. He has developed a suspicious nature. I still think that h will be soon himself again. I know that your love will turn awa his suspicion. I hope you will make advances to him, reason wit him, speak to him, and win him over. I cannot bear the idea c Manilal having an evil thought about you.

We are just now building new premises for the Ashram. I wis you were here to watch the progress of the buildings. The groun is beautifully situated. Maganlal is doing it all. He is doin what Albert was doing there whilst Phœnix was building. Fo him there is no pleasure outside the Ashram.

With love to you all,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desa

[1] Albert H. West
[2] This letter is not available.

309. LETTER TO SONJA SCHLESIN

[NADIAD,]
June 23, 1918

DEAR MISS SCHELSIN[1],

The long expected letter has come. We have all been looking forward to a letter from you.

Of course, Phœnix is not going to be sold. You can have 5 acres of ground in the centre. I like your dream specially as it includes a visit to India.

It delights me to find you getting tired of the typewriter. . . .[2]

I have not asked Ramdas to become a tailor; not that there is no poetry in tailoring. Ramdas may become a living *Sartor Resartus*. But he is a conscientious boy. He wants to gain all kinds of experiences. If he becomes a poet he will be one not of words and in words, but of actions and in actions. Ramdas is a visionary. And I like visionaries. I hope you will guide him, and befriend him. I wish you would live with Manilal for a while. You could carry on your studies there.

How are the Vogls[3], the Phillipses[4] and the Dokes[5]? Do you ever meet them? Where is MacIntyre[6]? What do you think of the community? Do you meet Thumbi[7]? What has come over him? These are questions which I should expect discussed in your letters. But something is better than nothing.

My life has become very complex. You must have read at least my important public letters. Now I am entering upon a big recruiting campaign. My work has involved constant railway travelling. I am longing for solitude and rest. They may never be my lot. Mrs. Gandhi has developed remarkably. She has

[1] Sonja Schlesin joined Gandhiji as a steno-typist and later played an important role in the satyagraha struggle in South Africa; *vide* Vol. VIII, p. 24.

[2] Some words are missing here in the source.

[3] Mrs. Vogl conducted classes for Indian women and organized Indian Bazaars in Johannesburg. She, as also her husband, a draper, took keen interest in the cause of Indians in South Africa.

[4] Charles Phillips, congregational minister in the Transvaal

[5] Mrs. J. J. Doke and Olive Doke

[6] An articled clerk with Gandhiji when he was in South Africa

[7] Thambi Naidoo, a passive resister

beautifully resigned herself to things she used to fight. But I must [not] describe things. You must see them for yourself.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

310. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
June 23, 1918

I see that you have made a good beginning with the work of teaching. I sent you some instructions yesterday. Take up grammar quite early. They will find it interesting. It will also be well to teach inflections as you start. They should be compared with the Tamil forms. Let me have some idea about the age of those who join and the progress they make.

The first pamphlet on enlistment[1] has been issued here. I send you three copies. It has also been translated into English. Let me know what you think of it after reading it. Lately, I have come to see the principle of non-violence in a somewhat different light, sublime none the less. Simultaneously, I also realize my shortcomings in the matter of self-control. My *tapascharya* is quite inadequate for this task. In this age, we do not get by our experiments one millionth part of the direct experience which they could formerly attain by *tapascharya*. Even if we find in thousands of instances that water is made up of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen, it cannot be said finally that this is its composition. The conclusion is only an inference. If, however, I take two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen and combine them to produce water, that would be definitive knowledge. It is knowledge verified in experience. Even if water can be made in any other manner, I have definitely shown with one experiment that it can be made by compounding [hydrogen and oxygen] in this way. We frequently act on inference but come to no harm. In matters of moment, we realize the inadequacy of inference and the supreme worth of direct experience. It is for this reason that

[1] *Vide* "Appeal for Enlistment", 22-6-1918.

observance of *yama-niyama*, etc., is essential. This is the only way to knowledge based on experience.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

311. LETTER TO MOHANDAS NAGJI

[NADIAD,]
June 23, 1918

My view about remarriage is that it would be proper for a man or a woman not to marry again after the death of the partner. The basis of Hinduism is self-control. Of course, self-control is enjoined in every religion, but Hinduism has attached to it especial importance. In such a religion, remarriage can be only an exception. These views of mine notwithstanding, so long as the practice of child-marriage continues and so long as men are free to marry as often as they choose, we should not stop a girl, who has become a widow while yet a child, from remarrying if she so desires, but should respect her wishes. I would not, however, put it into the head of even a child widow to remarry, though, if she did marry again, I would not regard her action as sinful.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

312. LETTER TO VITHALBHAI PATEL

[NADIAD,]
June 23, 1918

BHAISHRI VITHALBHAI,

I have your letter. I think it is better for persons like you to keep out of the Home Rule [League] and do what service you can. The Home Rule League is in a difficult plight at present. This is not owing to external difficulties; there are many internal problems. They have not been able to decide what line to follow : obstruction or co-operation. Enough has been done by way of the former. It is necessary now to stop it and do something constructive. The

League's capacity for service will not grow to its best unless this is done. Join the League by all means, if you want to do so merely that you may be able to guide it towards the path of service. But the members of the League will not welcome your entry if you fight with one and all. It is simple treachery to join any institution with the object of wrecking it. You will also be doing a great service to the country if you but learn the art of safeguarding your health.

How do you like Vallabhbhai's new profession? He has become a recruiting sergeant.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

313. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD

June 24, 1918

You all know the purpose of this meeting. You also know that Bombay has protested against the insulting behaviour of His Excellency the Governor towards members of the Home Rule League at the War Conference. At the Bombay meeting, too, I was in the chair and, having expressed my views there, I shall not take much of your time. This meeting is for two things: one, to support the action of Bombay and, two, to explain the position to those who do not read newspapers and, since even newspaper reports are often fragmentary and incorrect, to place the facts before newspaper readers as well. This is what today's meeting is for. His Excellency the Governor was faced with the question whether or not to invite Mr. Tilak and other swarajists to the War Conference. Since Mr. Tilak and Mrs. Besant had not been invited to the Delhi Conference, the question was an unusual one for Lord Willingdon and he gave it careful consideration. In the end, he invited them and Mr. Tilak accepted the invitation. The latter enquired whether he would be free to address the Conference and whether any amendments would be in order. He was told in reply that no amendments to the resolutions could be moved but that, after selected speakers had addressed the Conference on the resolutions, he would be free to speak and comment on their views. His Excellency sincerely meant what he said and there was no ambiguity in his words. And so Mr. Tilak and others went to the Conference. But what was their experience

there? Before Mr. Tilak had completed his second sentence, His Excellency the Governor interrupted him—stopped him from making any criticism. He did not know what Mr. Tilak wished to say. He knew nothing, of course, about what the speech would be like. And yet, believing that the sentence which Mr. Tilak had commenced with a 'but' would be objectionable, the Governor did not allow him to complete it and stopped him from proceeding further. Not that His Excellency would not have been within his rights in doing so, on some other occasion. It was, however, improper of him to have thus stopped a guest whom he had invited to his place to address a meeting and, in doing so, he has offered a gross insult to Mr. Tilak and the other distinguished guests, in fact to all the people of India. Mr. Tilak is no ordinary man. He is adored by the whole of India. It is really intolerable that he should have been ordered in this manner to resume his seat. We have assembled here today to demonstrate that the people of Ahmedabad too cannot tolerate this and to support Bombay's action. In this we are but doing our duty and showing ourselves to be true swarajists. It must be one of the implications of swaraj that any insult to India should be treated as an insult to Indian independence. We have come together today to call the Governor to account for having insulted Indian independence. We should tell him that he has offered us a serious insult and that he should apologize for that. With few exceptions, there is no newspaper in India which has approved of the Governor's action. They have all condemned it. Even *The Pioneer* has done so and said that when the need of the hour is to enlist the co-operation of the people such an incident should not have taken place. It has gone further and advised the Governor to swallow the bitter draught and get on with the work. The object of this meeting in Ahmedabad and the resolutions it is to pass are quite in order. One of the resolutions calls upon the Governor to apologize and says that, should he fail to do so, His Excellency the Viceroy should intervene and express his disapproval of the Governor's action, and further that, unless this is done, Home Rulers will not attend any meeting presided over by Lord Willingdon. We do not wish to extend our displeasure with him to the Empire nor to run away from our present duties. In the second resolution, we point out the difficulties we encounter in helping the Government. Our intention in it is to assert that we wish to help it, but cannot do so fully because there are certain things which need to be done, and which only the Government can do, before we can help. In saying that it cannot afford to ignore the educated classes and that the

Indian soldier will not rest satisfied with rights inferior to those enjoyed by the British soldier, we also point to our difficulties and argue that, if we have not been able to help, the reason lies with the Government itself. Let this cause be removed and we shall then withdraw our charge against it. This is not enough, however. There are certain things we must ourselves do. If we do not, we shall fail in our duty as swarajists. We pray to God to grant us swaraj this very day. But God tells us that we shall get it when we deserve it. If He were to give us all that we pray for, there would be complete chaos in the world. We have to prove our fitness for swaraj. We have ample material with which to silence our enemies, but it is our duty to see our defects as they are. If, being angry with the Government for these defects, we keep thinking of its shortcomings and sit back with folded hands, we shall never come to enjoy swaraj. Travelling all over India, I have gathered that her people want to live, as those of Canada and Australia do, as citizens having equal rights with the Government. We want it to obtain our consent for carrying on the war and only then ask us to contribute men and money. If our intention is not to leave the Empire, it is to our advantage to work with the British as partners. Our first and last duty is to join the Empire in making sacrifices and to make them courageously. It is only thus that we shall succeed in getting swaraj early. Our duty is two-fold: to resist injustice and take the necessary steps to end it and, at the same time, to stand by the Government in its hour of difficulty. If we mind these two duties, we shall have proved our *bona fides*. If we want to disprove the charge against us, we should give it no reason to doubt our loyalty—this is the only real way to punish it. There is another aspect to this resolution, which, too, you should consider. I have had a letter from Mr. Tilak in which he says that, if the Government of India would place the Indian soldier on the same footing as the British soldier, he would be prepared to give 5,000 men in six months and, should he fail, to pay a penalty of Rs. 100/- for every man [short of that figure]. For this purpose, he has also sent me a cheque for Rs 50,000.[1] I have had talks with Mr. Jinnah and Mrs. Besant, too on this subject. They have admitted that we should supply the required number of men to the Empire. Mr. Tilak believes that if we make definite conditions with the Government for helping it no room would be left for any misunderstanding afterwards and that, therefore, that is the course we should adopt. I hold, on the

[1] The cheque was returned to Tilak.

contrary, that we lose nothing by trusting, and so I have no hesitation in advising people to join up. We shall, by doing so, get what we have been demanding. I believe in trusting people and my advice, therefore, is that we should proceed on the basis of trust. I have attended this meeting to tell you that, if your chanting of the swaraj *mantra* is to be efficacious, you should do your duty. To wipe out the blot on the face of Gujarat, people should take to careers in the army. This is the best way of learning to defend Ahmedabad, should it ever be raided. We do not propose to turn this into a recruitment meeting but, when such a meeting is called, you should not fail in your duty.

[From Gujarati]

Prajabandhu, 30-6-1918

314. SPEECH AT RAS

June 26, 1918

Gandhiji began with the assurance that he had not come with the intention of forcing anyone to join the army. As a man trying to practise *ahimsa-dharma*, he could compel them not by physical force but only by the force of his love, as also by awakening the feelings of patriotism and true self-interest. He was there to advise them to join the army. The same advice he had taken to himself and had tendered his eldest son, who was married and had five children. He continued:

Voluntary recruiting is a key to swaraj and will give us honour and manhood. The honour of women is bound up with it. Today we are unable to protect our women and childrn even against wild animals. The best way of acquiring the capacity of self-protection is joining the army. Some will ask, 'Why get killed in France?' But there is a meaning in being thus killed. When we send our dear ones to the battle-field, the courage and the strength which they will acquire will transform all the villages. The training we can get today we may never get again.

Mr. Gandhi spoke of *Dharala*, *Vaghris* and *Patidars* in the same breath, as the qualities of Kshatriyas were common to them. He exhorted them to use for the protection of the motherland their valour, which otherwise led to mutual quarrels.

Taking the population of a village at one thousand we should have twenty recruits from each village or two per hundred. What are two in a hundred? How many men do cholera and such other diseases take away every year? These men die unmourned

except by their relatives. On the other hand, soldiers' death on the battle-field makes them immortal, if the scriptures are right, and becomes a source of joy and pride to those left behind. From the death of Kshatriyas will be born the guardians of the nation and no Government can withold arms from such men.

One of their friends was ready to enlist that day, he said, but could not do so for two months on account of debts. Many similar cases might be found. Mr. Gandhi requested the village leaders to inquire into the cases of such men, find out their pecuniary condition and undertake the management of their business and the maintenance of their families. He continued:

You could then inspire young men to enlist. *A national army could be thus created instead of a mercenary one.* There is not a family in England, rich or poor, which does not mourn the loss of a relative. It has now been decided there to call up men up to the age of 51. If we desire to govern our country and defend it, every young man should join the army.

He expressed the hope that the village people will discuss the matter and resolve to give two men for every hundred.

For years we have been deprived of our fighting capacity. How are we to acquire the use of arms for which our ancestors practised penances and took severe pledges?

Some argue that we would be deprived of arms after the war. Now, there is no power on earth that could, against our will, deprive us of arms after we have once been trained. Government is not foolish or it could not govern. Our mightiest weapon, satyagraha, is always with us. But he cannot be a satyagrahi who is afraid of death. The ability to use physical force is necessary for a true appreciation of satyagraha. He alone can practise ahimsa who knows how to kill, i.e., knows what *himsa* is.

In conclusion, Mr. Gandhi said:

Sisters, you should encourage your husbands and brothers and sons and not to worry them with your objections. If you want them to be true men, send them to the army with your blessings. Don't be anxious about what may happen to them on the battle-field. Your piety will watch over them there. And if they fall, console yourselves with the thought that they have fallen in the discharge of their duty and that they will be yours in your next incarnation.

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-7-1918

315. SPEECH AT KHEDA[1]

June 27, 1918

We generally believe that having to go to jail is a disgrace; anyone who has to do so is all the time nervous with fear when he is inside and keeps counting his days, thinking when he would complete his term there and be able to get out. This is the mental condition of the prisoner who has violated a law of the country and society, but it is different with a satyagrahi. That is why, in this struggle for upholding our self-respect and rights, we advocate jail-going. There is not the least trace of suffering or depression on the faces of those friends here who have been released from jail. The whole of Kheda looks up to them with pride and is celebrating this occasion as a mark of respect for them. To one type of person, going to jail is a matter of disgrace; to another, it is a matter of pride. The former returns from jail a hardened man. While in jail, he resorts to deceit and becomes unruly; our friends on the other hand have sanctified the jail by their presence. Not only did they respect the regulations in jail, but the opportunity which their imprisonment offered, they utilized for calm thinking, took solemn vows to give up tea and smoking and resolved to dedicate their lives to the service of the country. All the time they were in jail, the one constant thought in their minds was what they should do for the country. Thus they used their twenty days in jail in a manner no one had done before them; imprisonment, therefore, is not a matter of disgrace for us, but rather of honour. May we all have to serve such terms of imprisonment. My brothers and sisters, pray for this only so that we may all be able to render the purest service to the country.

This great change in our friends while in jail is solely due to Shri Mohanlal Pandya. His life is evidence of how much but one truthful man among the people can achieve and to what extent he can influence others. I do not wish to give less credit to the other friends, but it cannot be gainsaid that, had it not been for Pandya, the results would not have been so happy.

[1] The meeting was held to welcome satyagrahis released from jail, after serving a term of imprisonment for removing onion crops from fields forfeited to Government for non-payment of land revenue. According to a newspaper report, Gandhiji went on foot from Mehmedabad to Kheda to receive the satyagrahis.

Jail-going is not the crowning step in satyagraha; it is, in a sense, only the foundation. There is a fundamental difference between going to jail through satyagraha and doing so for some crime.

For instance, if one lands in jail for assaulting anyone while refusing to pay the land revenue, that cannot be called satyagraha. The assault and the imprisonment are both a matter of disgrace. However, a man may sincerely repent for the assault and his term in jail will then be a *prayashchit*, though, even so, it will not be satyagraha.

On this occasion of the return of our friends from jail, let us consider what satyagraha means. He who deliberately takes suffering on himself is called a satyagrahi. The rule of justice which holds between two brothers holds also between the Government and the people. A satyagrahi cannot please society every time; he has sometimes to incur its displeasure and offer satyagraha against it too. We want to see the principles of satyagraha spread all over India as rapidly as possible. Even if a single part of India, ever so small, were to embrace satyagraha, very great things could be achieved. Many of those who are present here are advocates of swaraj. They should not forsake truth even for a moment. If they do, they will have to go through utter darkness, without so much as a glimpse of the holy sun. It is the duty of a satyagrahi to place the principles of truth fearlessly before the country. He will, in the process, serve the whole world.

My brothers and sisters, I would say to you: If we have decided to dedicate ourselves to satyagraha in all sincerity of heart, we have only one duty: to cling to truth till the last breath. If you are convinced that the country will not suffer because of our insistence on truth, then, with God as witness, resolve that you would not forsake the truth, even if this earth should sink into the bottomless pit. Then alone will you be real lovers of swaraj, will you deserve to wear *genuine badges* of swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

316. SPEECH AT NAVAGAM[1]

June 27, 1918

The man who should stand before you today, after having been released from jail, is myself; it was I who advised the onions to be dug up. I told them they could boldly go ahead with the digging, and so they did. The Government stopped them and, not satisfied with that, sent six of these friends to jail. The one who should have been imprisoned was left free and the credit has gone to those who were sent to jail. We have assembled here today from all over the surrounding villages to celebrate the occasion and welcome them back.

Navagam's renown has spread all over Gujarat today. By going to jail our friends here have taken the crowning step in satyagraha. The sisters have also understood that, since we committed no crime, there was no disgrace in having gone to jail. I should like to see this spirit spread over the whole of Kheda district.

We fought the battle of land revenue, but had no chance of going to jail. This, too, we have had now, by God's grace. It does not seem from their faces that they had suffered anything at all. Being happy or otherwise depends on one's mind. What the mind takes to be happiness is happiness and what it takes to be misery is misery. Our friends here felt no pain in having to go to jail, for they were convinced of the need to do so for the sake of the country and their pledge, and they welcomed the sentence of imprisonment. To them the jail was like a palace, and while there they learned to practise self-control. You should welcome imprisonment in this way, learn self-control in jail, taking vows.

The path of satyagraha is a very hard one but, to the extent that we succeed in following it, we shall be more of men.

This will be a blessed day and our descendants will celebrate it as such if this occasion teaches us to live for the country, to work for her, to die for her.

Had it not been for Mohanlal Pandya, you could not have achieved what you have done. Let us hope that men and women of Navagam will be imbued with the same courage as Mohanlal's, so that they stand in no need of outside help. Navagam

[1] The passive resisters, released and greeted at Kheda, were taken in procession to Navagam, their home village.

has had the advantage of Mohanlal Pandya's experience and also earned the credit which, otherwise, some other place might have had the good fortune to do. I should like you to turn his experience to good account.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

317. SPEECH AT KATHLAL[1]

June 28, 1918

The longer I am in India, the more I see that some people believe I have set myself up as a guru. I cautioned them against this in South Africa and caution you here again. I know uttering such a caution can itself be a way of seeking honour. Even at the risk of seeming to do so, I shall say that it is not for me to be anyone's guru. I am not fit to be that. Even in South Africa, when there were hallowed occasions like the present one, I had refused the position and do so today once more. I am myself in search of a guru. How can a man, himself in search of a guru, be a guru to anyone else? I had my political guru in Gokhale, but I cannot be one to anybody else because I am still a child in matters of politics. Again, if I agreed to be a guru and accepted someone as my disciple, and the latter did not come up to my expectations or ran away, I would be very much hurt.

I hold that a man should think, not once, but many times before declaring himself anyone's disciple. A disciple proves his discipleship by carrying out any order of the guru the moment it is uttered, much as a paid servant would. Whether or not he has made himself such a servant will be known only when he shows that he has fully carried out the order. The work I have been doing has brought me in the public eye. It has been such as would appeal to the people. If I have shown any skill in this struggle, it has been only in seeing the direction in which the current of popular feeling was flowing and trying to direct it into the right channel, with happy results.

I am trying to be a satyagrahi. It is not always that a satyagrahi acts in accordance with popular opinion. He may even have to oppose it. In satyagraha, there can be no room for any falsehood. Everyone is welcome to plunge into it. The lives of us all

[1] At this meeting an address was presented to Mohanlal Pandya.

are full of experiments. If we go on making experiments, we shall always stand to gain something or other from them. Weeds are ever mixed with grass as chaff with grains of wheat. In the same way, every effort has two results. Just as we throw away the chaff and use the wheat, so in life we must embrace the truth and reject falsehood. There are many things I should like to do and I want to do them all, carrying you with me as brothers and sisters. Take me for your elder brother, if you like. I shall be satisfied with that. That is the role I would assign to myself.

All that has been said about Mohanlal Pandya and other friends who went to jail is quite correct. The fear of jail brings tears to our eyes, but these friends went to jail, stayed there and returned, all with smiles on their faces. We cannot, therefore, congratulate them well enough on this occasion. Mohanlal Pandya had his first lesson in satyagraha in this struggle and at the end of it he is found to have passed an advanced examination in it. By honouring him, you have, in fact, honoured yourselves.

You will have properly understood satyagraha only if, in the wake of the struggle, the village of Kathlal comes to have a new look and has numerous good works to show in future. If we guard the jewel that we have discovered, it will ever, like the *Kalpavriksha*[1], bear any fruit we would have.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

318. FRAGMENT OF LETTER[2]

[NADIAD,]
June 29, 1918

I also do not think that the boy[3] is innocent. If you would please me, see that he has justice in a court.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Mythical tree which fulfilled every wish

[2] Addressee's name is not given in the source.

[3] Harilal, Gandhiji's eldest son, whose speculative dealings seem to have involved some party in a business loss.

319. SPEECH AT NADIAD[1]

June 29, 1918

First, let me draw your attention to the lesson of satyagraha taught by some of our sisters here. Some others we cannot see because they are in purdah. I say to them and to those brothers who are responsible for their remaining in purdah that, in a state such as this where half our body is constricted, we cannot work for India. The sisters here who have ignored the arrangement for them to keep behind the purdah and have preferred to sit out in the open in freedom, deserve our congratulations.

I thank you for the address you have presented; but one who is wedded to service cannot accept any kind of honour. Such a person has dedicated his all to Krishna. Consequently, the honour I get can only be offered up to Krishna. He who is dedicated to service cannot hanker after honour. The moment he desires honour, he has betrayed his dedication to service. I have often seen that many work for money, many others for honour, and still others for fame. Yearning for money is bad enough, but the desire for honour is worse still. Sometimes a man commits more sins for honour and reputation than he would for the sake of money. It is one thing to maintain self-respect, and quite another to desire honour from either the people or the Government. A man hankering after praise does grave harm not only to himself but also to the people. Praise is a thing which will cloud the judgment of even very great men. If you wish to maintain your self-respect, I request you in all humility not to overload me with honours. The best way to honour me is to accept my advice and act upon it intelligently. Only then will you have honoured me truly. . . .[2]

The sagacity of a general lies in his choice of lieutenants. Certain objectives having been decided upon and rules framed, results will be achieved only if the army goes ahead with its work guided by these. If it fails to do so, the general by himself cannot accomplish anything great. . . .[3] Not that I have accomplished anything great. . . .[4] Many people were ready to follow my advice. . . .[5] I wondered who the deputy general should be. My

[1] This was in reply to an address presented to Gandhiji on the successful outcome of the satyagraha campaign.

[2], [3], [4] & [5] Omissions are in the source.

eye fell upon Shri Vallabhbhai. I must admit that the first time I saw him I wondered who that stiff man could be. What could he do! But, as I came in contact with him, I knew that I must have him. Vallabhbhai saw that this work was far more important than his practice and his work in the municipality, of much account though they were. He was flourishing in his profession then, he thought, but things might change any day, his money might be squandered; rather than that his heirs should do this, he would leave them a better legacy. With these thoughts in his mind, he took a plunge. Had I not chanced on Vallabhbhai, what has been achieved would not have been achieved, so happy has been my experience of him.

I feel that the other friends are automatically honoured when honour is rendered to Vallabhbhai and so I do not mention their names. The Chairman actually published a list of awards the way the Emperor does. I am acting merely as his agent. There are names which do not occur, they cannot occur, in his imperial list. I shall declare these names here. The peace and joy of those who accept the mission of service are beyond description. I have tasted the joys of life to the utmost and I have come to the conclusion that the *atman* has its highest bliss only in dedication to service. As the truest examples of such dedication, I shall mention my friends, the sweepers of Anathashram. The love they have showered on me has been beyond words. Similarly, the children in the orphanage always vied with one another in serving me. I never conversed with them without a little merriment. What shall I offer to them? I do not possess a single pice. They are as my children. The selfless service I have had from them I do not receive even from barristers and advocates.

We have passed through many experiences. Kheda has not had the suffering which is, often, a satyagrahi's portion. It had seemed to me that the struggle might remain incomplete, but these friends here who went to jail saw that it did not. Their short term of imprisonment was not enough for the purpose, though. So sweet is the taste of satyagraha that one who has known it will ask for nothing else. If Kheda has had this experience, it is thanks to its energy and strength, its efficiency. It is entirely because of these that Kheda has achieved good results. It is a mere trifle that we have won on the issue of land revenue, but, as I have often told you, the important gains are fearlessness and the feeling that we are the equals of even the highest officers—in no way inferior to them. I hope this struggle will have made you permanently conscious of your strength to employ satyagraha at any time. Once the

flame is kindled, it cannot be extinguished but burns ever more brightly. Let this be the abiding result of satyagraha. If it remains with you, we shall always see satyagraha in some village or other of Kheda. It is my earnest wish that such happy results may ever bless Kheda.

In your address you have said something about giving *guru-dakshina*[1] to me. I do not accept the role of a guru. If, however, you wish to render me any service, I certainly want it. It will cost you a lot.

For the love showered on me by Kheda, and for the service the volunteers have done me, I pray to God to grant me wisdom and vouchsafe me greater strength in following the ideal of service. Only so can I express my boundless love. If ever I have spoken bitter words to you, kindly forgive me. I have said nothing in malice but all in the service of the country.

[From Gujarati]

Kheda Satyagraha

320. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING[2]

NADIAD,
June 30, 1918

MY DEAR ESTHER,

I had no time to write to you ere this. I wonder if you have read all I have been writing and saying just now. What am I to advise a man to do who wants to kill but is unable owing to his being maimed? Before I can make him feel the virtue of not killing, I must restore to him the arm he has lost. I have always advised young Indians to join the army, but have hitherto refrained from actively asking them to do so, because I did not feel sufficiently interested in the purely political life of the country or in the war itself. But a different and difficult situation faced me in Delhi. I felt at once that I was playing with the greatest problem of life in not tackling the question of joining the army seriously. Either we must renounce the benefits of the State or help it to the best of our ability to prosecute the war. We are not ready to

[1] The disciple's offering to a teacher at the end of his studies

[2] This was in reply to Esther Faering's question: "How can one, who believes firmly and has given his own life for the sake of exercising passive resistance always and everywhere, ask others to join the war and fight?"

renounce. Indians have a double duty to perform. If they are to preach the mission of peace, they must first prove their ability in war. This is a terrible discovery but it is true. A nation that is unfit to fight cannot from experience prove the virtue of not fighting. I do not infer from this that India must fight. But I do say that India must know how to fight. Ahimsa is the eradication of the desire to injure or to kill. Ahimsa can be practised only towards those that are inferior to you in every way. It follows therefore that to become a full ahimsaist you have to attain absolute perfection. Must we all then first try to become Sandows before we can love perfectly? This seems to be unnecessary. It is enough if we can face the world without flinching. It is personal courage that is an absolute necessity. And some will acquire that courage only after they have been trained to fight. I know I have put the argument most clumsily. I am passing through new experiences. I am struggling to express myself. Some things are still obscure to me. And I am trying to find words for others which are plain to me. I am praying for light and guidance and am acting with the greatest deliberation. Do please write and fight every inch of the ground that to you may appear untenable. That will enable me to find the way.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

[PS.]

Devdas is in Madras now and, if you are in Madras, you should meet him. His address is. . . . He is taking Hindi classes.

My Dear Child, pp. 28-9

321. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

NADIAD,
Jyeshtha Krishna 6 [*June 30, 1918*]

DEAR JAMNALALJI,

I have your letter. If you can allow me to use the money set apart for railway expenses for building work,[1] my trouble will be over. I have written to other friends also. Shankarlal Banker has sent Rs. 4,000. Ambalalji is sending Rs. 5,000. This helps towards expenses already incurred. I hope for some help from two other friends also. If you will give the Rs. 25,000 for building work, I can be free from anxiety to a great extent. There is no need to provide for railway expenses. These expenses are met from the normal receipts.

Please do not think that you must give the money because I write. Give it only if you can do so for building work without any reservation.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2839

322. LETTER TO G. K. DEVADHAR

[NADIAD,]
July 2, 1918

MY DEAR DEVADHAR,

I thank you for sending me your report of the Sewa Sadan work. It is a monument to your industry, nationalism of a constructive type and your love of service. The progress is indeed phenomenal. There is probably nothing quite like it in all India. If you have a lady teacher whom you can spare, I want one, even two, to replace Avantikabai and Anandibai from Champaran.

And now for suggestions. A smattering of English is worse than useless; it is an unnecessary tax on our women. When we cease to make use of English where we ought not to use it

[1] The Sabarmati Ashram was under construction.

believe me, the Englishmen will talk to us in our own language, as they ought. Lord Chelmsford was quite pleased when I spoke at the Conference[1] in Urdu. By all means teach a select few ladies all the English you can so that they might translate the best English thought to their other sisters. This is what I call economy of languages. I would therefore replace English by Hindi. The latter will liberalize the Deccan woman who like the rest of her sisters, is today parochial and it will add to her usefulness as a national worker.

Harmonium is only a stage removed from the concertina. I should give them the *vina*[2] and the *sitar*[3]. These are cheap, national and infinitely superior to the harmonium. Lastly, I would like everyone to learn cotton-spinning and hand-weaving to the exclusion of fancy work. Through the instrumentality of two workers I have got 100 *rentias*[4] working, providing a livelihood for probably 300 women. When India regains her natural calm and quiet dignity, mills will be a thing of the past. We shall then find our Ranis spinning yarn of the finest count as they used to before. I would like you to hasten that day. Believe me we shall soon have a surfeit of these things.

The ordinary tendency is to move with the times. We who must continually elect and select may not always follow the times spirit; we may, we should, anticipate the future. He who runs may see, if he would also think, that the future lies with handicraftsmanship. Anyway, you cannot go wrong by encouraging the women to go in for hand-spinning and weaving. They will be helping to clothe the naked.

I have given you more than you bargained for. Many thanks for giving Amratlal and Kesariprasad. Tell Mrs. Devadhar I shall expect her to come and stay at the Ashram for a few days.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] The War Conference at Delhi
[2] & [3] Popular Indian stringed musical instruments
[4] Spinning-wheels

323. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 2, 1918

I am very glad that you write so very regularly. I also wish to be regular, but you should not wait for my letters. There was no letter from you today. The conversation about Natesan was interesting. Do as suits you best. The work in which you are engaged at present is very important, how very important you may not perhaps realize just now. Generally, such work would be entrusted only to a very intelligent and mature person. Even if that were done, it is doubtful whether enough people will come forward to learn [Hindi] in a place like Madras. If you succeed in getting the people of the province of Madras to accept your gift of Hindi, you will have solved a difficult problem. You will then have joined Madras with other parts of India. This bridge which you have undertaken to build requires greater skill and patience than would be required in building a bridge across the Ganga. The task of making Hindi simple and interesting will exercise all your skill. To succeed in this, you will do well to read, during your leisure hours, books on Hindi, Gujarati, English and Tamil grammars. This might reveal to you some key which will enable you to impart more knowledge with less effort. Teach a large number of derivative words [at the same time as the root word]. That will tax the memory less. I have told you to consider what arrangements can be made for the Hindi-speaking people whom we want to send there to learn Tamil. You should discuss this with Mr. Natesan, Hanumantrao and others. Revashankar Sodha and Chhotam have returned to the Ashram. I welcome this, although it adds to the responsibility. Harilal will pass through by the night train today on his way from Rajkot. We have had news of the death of . . .'s[1] mother. Write to her from your end. I brought up the matter yesterday and we had a purifying discussion. I call the discussion purifying because everyone gave truthful answers, with the utmost civility and reverence. The question was this: Now . . .[2] will like to go for the customary mourning visit on her mother's death. This will cost eighty rupees. Can the Ashram afford the expense? Should it agree to bear it? A person who has embraced

[1] & [2] Names have been omitted in the source.

poverty in the cause of the country and has dedicated himself to service of others can never lose his mother by death, because all women, old enough to be so, are his mothers. The father also does not die because every elder is like a father to him. Service is his wife; can she ever know death? The rest of the world are like brothers and sisters to him. To go on a mourning visit on the death of one's mother is only a formality. Should money be wasted to follow it out of deference to the world? This was the question discussed. Everyone replied, in all solemnity, that such an expenditure would be unjustified. Santok and Ba were also present. It was unanimously decided, though, that the idea should not be acted upon this time and the matter should be left entirely to the discretion of. . .[1] and . . .[2] behn. Most probably they will go.

Do you read any newspapers there? May I send you any from here?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

324. *LETTER TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA*

[NADIAD,]
July 2, 1918

BHAISHRI PRANJIVAN,

I have not been able to write to you for some time past. I carry on with the money I get here and do not go out to beg. I am in utmost need of money at present. Construction work is in progress. I have already spent forty thousand rupees on it. Sixty thousand more will be required. I have to provide accommodation for at least a hundred and fifty persons and install sixteen looms. Work on cloth is expanding rapidly. After the Ahmedabad strike, I have come into contact with a number of weavers. About three hundred women have started working the *rentia*. I believe we shall get, before long, about two maunds of handspun yarn every day. These women were unemployed. They are employed now. About thirty weavers outside have also found employment. Some of these are *Dheds*. They used to labour for wages but now they have found an independent vocation. I think this is a very important activity.

[1] & [2] Names have been omitted in the source.

For it, too, I need more money. I reckon I shall have to invest ten thousand rupees in this. The National School activity is, I think, equally important. It is my impression that even at present the boys of this school compare favourably with other boys at the same stage of education. The qualities of fearlessness, etc., which they have acquired are there for all to see. I can see that the school will require one thousand rupees every month, though just now the expenses are lower. If I were to look after both these activities myself I am sure I could expand them considerably. But I cannot manage that. Even as it is, I find that good progress is being made in both. I have to tax you for a large amount just now and should like you, as a permanent arrangement, to make good any deficit that may remain after contributions from elsewhere have been received. Please give, if you can, what I have asked for, so that my anxieties may end. If you disapprove of my work, I certainly cannot ask you for anything. But do not stint if you think that it is along the right lines.

You must be watching my work of recruitment. Of all my activities, I regard this as the most difficult and the most important. If I succeed in it, genuine swaraj is assured.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

325. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 3, 1918

I think you must get the books there. You would do well to arrange for the other things also to be brought over there. It seems we have abused . . .'s[1] goodness. Because she does not insist, we let things go on. I want you to act now as if you had been served with a twenty-four hour's notice. There is nothing like our serving notice on ourselves.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

326. REMARKS ON ENLISTMENT[1]

[Nadiad,]
July 4, 1918

Swaraj means—complete independence in association with Britain. If we can help in this war, instead of her ruling over us we shall have the upper hand. It is essential for us to get military training. I have come across none in India who adheres to non-violence so scrupulously as I do. I am overfull of love. Nobody has noted the wicked things the British have done as well as I have, nor their deeds of goodness. To him who wants to learn the art of fighting, who would know how to kill, I would even teach the use of force. If I fail in the attempt this time, you may conclude that my *tapascharya* is imperfect as yet. He who does not know how to lay down his life without killing others may learn how to die killing.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

327. LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT

[Nadiad,]
July 4, 1918

I search *New India* in vain for an emphatic declaration from you in favour of unconditional recruiting. Surely it must be plain that, if every Home Rule Leaguer became an active recruiting depot, we would ensure the passing of the Congress-League Scheme with only such modifications as we may agree to. I think this is the time when we must give the people [a] lead and not await their opinion. I would like to see you with your old fire growing the stronger in face of opposition. If we supplied recruits, we should dictate terms. But if we wait for the terms, the War may close, India may remain without a real military training and we should be face to face with a military dictatorship. This is taking the most selfish view of the situation and self-interest

[1] Made in the course of a discussion with visitors

suggests the course I have ventured to place before the country as the only effective course.

I know you will not consider my letter as a presumption.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

328. LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

[NADIAD,]
July 4, 1918

DEAR MR. JINNAH,

I do wish you would make an emphatic declaration regarding recruitment. Can you not see that if every Home Rule Leaguer became a potent recruiting agency whilst, at the same time, fighting for constitutional rights, we would ensure the passing of the Congress-League Scheme, with only such modifications (if any) that we may agree to? We would then speak far more effectively than we do today. "Seek ye first the Recruiting Office and everything will be added unto you." We must give the lead to the people and not think how the people will take what we say. What I ask for is an emphatic declaration, not a halting one.

I know you will not mind my letter.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

329. LETTER TO C. S. RANGA IYER

[NADIAD,]
July 4, 1918

DEAR MR. RANGA IYER[1],

I thank you for your congratulations.[2] I shall not misunderstand your inability to hold numerous meetings in the villages.[3] I know how difficult the thing is. And yet without our penetration into the villages our Home Rule schemes are of little value. With the people really at our back, we should make our march to our goal irresistibly. That we do not see such a simple truth is the saddest part of the tragedy being enacted in front of us. If you would get out of it, you would, even at the risk of closing your paper, learn Hindi and, then, work among the villages. I know you have laboured valiantly for your paper. But it was labour almost mis-spent. We must give the fruits of our Western learning to our millions, whereas we, circulating ideas among ourselves, describe, like the blindfolded ox, the same circle and mistake it for motion forward.

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

330. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 4, 1918

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I read your letter with great care and interest. You did wisely in writing that letter. I find no immodesty in it. The language is courteous and graced with the spirit of independence and very

[1] Member, Central Legislative Council; author of *Father India*, *India in the Crucible*, etc.

[2] On the success of the Kheda Satyagraha

[3] C. S. Ranga Iyer had promised to hold 40 meetings in villages in support of the Kheda Satyagraha.

sweet to me on that account. The letter shows your fearlessness . . .[1]

I was ignorant of some of the things and had a vague idea about the others that you mention. You have given me a clearer picture. I did not know enough to be able to set matters right. I shall be able to do so in the light of what you have said. . .[2]

My being deceived does no harm to us. For instance, your character or your studies have not been affected. If we ourselves stick to our high ideal, no harm results. If one keeps one's house clean, neither the plague nor any other infection can ever enter it. Even if it does, it cannot stay there long. Similarly, as long as we remain pure, the plague of wickedness, even if it should ever infect our family, cannot possess it for long. You must have observed that persons who have come in contact with me had their vices discovered sooner or later.

With your permission, I wish to show your letter to all concerned. They will not be angry with you—they ought not to be. In the Ashram, we want that you and others, should express openly whatever you think at any time. If possible, I shall be in the Ashram for two nights and will return by the morning train on the following day, so that we may have an evening at our disposal.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

331. LETTER TO G. A. NATESAN

NADIAD,
July 5, 1918

DEAR MR. NATESAN,

So Devdas is now receiving at your hands a nurse's affection and care. I am truly sorry for this addition to your burdens. I had hoped that Devdas would not behave quite so indecently as to fall ill. Pray thank Dr. Krishnaswami on my behalf for attending to Devdas. I hope for your sakes that he will soon be himself again. I understand your mother's scruples. If you were strong

[1] & [2] Some words are omitted in the source.

enough, she would waive them in favour of Devdas and that would be a precedent for the future. You saw how nobly she behaved over Naicker? You doubted your own ability to carry her with you. It is a habit into which we reformers have fallen—never to think of beginning with our own homes. We now find it difficult to mend ourselves. What was intended to be a letter of thanks has ended in a sermon. Please pardon the offence.

I know you will wire if there is anything serious with Devdas.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2230

332. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

[NADIAD,]
July 5, 1918

I do not know what report you have read in the *Chronicle*. There is an official Recruiting Agent who has the effrontery to be my namesake. It may be a glowing report of his which you may have read. So far I have not a single recruit to my credit apart from the co-workers who are all under promise to serve or to find substitutes. The task is most difficult. It is the toughest job I have yet handled in my life. However, it is yet too early to forecast any result.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

333. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 5, 1918

I feel worried. You know our rule. One must not fall sick. Self-restraint is all that is necessary to ensure that one does not. Sufficient exercise and only as much food as one needs : if one keeps in mind these two things, one will never suffer in health.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

334. LETTER TO MANIBHAI PATEL

[NADIAD,]
July 5, 1918

BHAISHRI MANIBHAI[1],

I have your letter. I can understand your feelings but can offer no help. Time does its work. It will bring you peace.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

335. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[NADIAD,]
July 6, 1918

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letters.[2] I prize them. They give me only partial consolation. My difficulties are deeper than you have put them. All you raise I can answer. I must attempt in this letter to reduce my own to writing. They just now possess me to the exclusion of everything else. All the other things I seem to be doing purely mechanically. This hard thinking has told upon my physical system. I hardly want to talk to anybody. I do not want even to write anything, not even these thoughts of mine. I am therefore falling back upon dictation to see whether I can clearly express them. I have not yet reached the bottom of my difficulties, much less have I solved them. The solution is not likely to affect my immediate work. But of the failure I can now say nothing. If my life is spared I must reach the secret somehow.

You say: "Indians as a race did repudiate it, bloodlust, with full consciousness in days gone by and deliberately took their choice to stand on the side of humanity." Is this historically true? I see no sign of it either in the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*, not even in my favourite Tulsidas which is much superior in spirituality to Valmiki[3]. I am not now thinking of these works

[1] Father of Raojibhai Patel

[2] *Vide* footnote to "Letter to C. F. Andrews", before 23-6-1918.

[3] The author of the original *Ramayana* in Sanskrit

in their spiritual meanings. The incarnations are described as certainly bloodthirsty, revengeful and merciless to the enemy. They have been credited with having resorted to tricks also for the sake of overcoming the enemy. The battles are described with no less zest than now, and the warriors are equipped with weapons of destruction such as could be possibly conceived by the human imagination. The finest hymn composed by Tulsidas in praise of Rama gives the first place to his ability to strike down the enemy. Then take the Mahomedan period. The Hindus were not less eager than the Mahomedans to fight. They were simply disorganized, physically weakened and torn by internal dissensions. The code of Manu prescribes no such renunciation that you impute to the race. Buddhism, conceived as a doctrine of universal forbearance, signally failed, and, if the legends are true, the great Shankaracharya did not hesitate to use unspeakable cruelty in banishing Buddhism out of India. And he succeeded! Then the English period. There has been compulsory renunciation of arms but not the desire to kill. Even among the Jains the doctrine has signally failed. They have a superstitious horror of blood(shed), but they have as little regard for the life of the enemy as an European. What I mean to say is that they would rejoice equally with anybody on earth over the destruction of the enemy. All then that can be said of India is that individuals have made serious attempts, with greater success than elsewhere, to popularize the doctrine. But there is no warrant for the belief that it has taken deep root among the people.

You say further : "My point is that it has become an unconscious instinct, which can be awakened any time as you yourself have shown." I wish it was true. But I see that I have shown nothing of the kind. When friends told me here that passive resistance was taken up by the people as a weapon of the weak, I laughed at the libel, as I called it then. But they were right and I was wrong. With me alone and a few other co-workers it came out of our strength and was described as satyagraha, but with the majority it was purely and simply passive resistance what they resorted to, because they were too weak to undertake methods of violence. This discovery was forced on me repeatedly in Kaira. The people here, being comparatively freer, talked to me without reserve, and told me plainly that they took up my remedy because they were not strong enough to take up the other, which they undoubtedly held to be far more manly than mine. I fear that the people whether in Champaran or in Kaira would not fearlessly walk to the gallows, or stand a shower of bullets and yet say, in one

case, 'we will not pay the revenue', and in the other, 'we will not work for you'. They have it not in them. And I contend that they will not regain the fearless spirit until they have received the training to defend themselves. *Ahimsa* was preached to man when he was in full vigour of life and able to look his adversaries straight in the face. It seems to me that full development of body-force is a *sine qua non* of full appreciation and assimilation of *ahimsa.*

I do agree with you that India with her moral force could hold back from her shores any combination of armies from the West or the East or the North or the South. The question is, how can she cultivate this moral force? Will she have to be strong in body before she can understand even the first principles of this moral force? This is how millions blashpheme the Lord of the Universe every morning before sunrise.

"I am changeless Brahma, not a collection of the five elements—earth, etc.—I am that Brahma whom I recall every morning as the spirit residing in the innermost sanctuary of my heart, by whose grace the whole speech is adorned, and whom the Vedas have described as '*Neti, neti*'."

I say we blaspheme the Lord of the Universe in reciting the above verse because it is a parrot recitation without any consideration of its grand significance. One Indian realizing in himself all that the verse means is enough to repel the mightiest army that can approach the shores of India. But it is not in us today and it will not come until there is an atmosphere of freedom and fearlessness on the soil. How to produce that atmosphere? Not without the majority of the inhabitants feeling that they are well able to protect themselves from the violence of man or beast. Now I think I can state my difficulty. It is clear that before I can give a child an idea of *moksha*, I must let it grow into full manhood. I must allow it to a certain extent to be even attached to the body, and then when it has understood the body and so the world around it, may I easily demonstrate the transitory nature of the body and the world, and make it *feel* that the body is given not for the indulgence of self but for its liberation. Even so must I wait for instilling into any mind the doctrine of ahimsa, i.e., perfect love, when it has grown to maturity by having its full play through a vigorous body. My difficulty now arises in the practical application of the idea. What is the meaning of having a vigorous body? How far should India have to go in for a training in arms-bearing? Must every individual go through the practice or is it enough that a free atmosphere is created and the people will, without having to bear arms, etc., imbibe the necessary personal courage from their

surroundings? I believe that the last is the correct view, and, therefore, I am absolutely right as things are in calling upon every Indian to join the army, always telling him at the same time that he is doing so not for the lust of blood, but for the sake of learning not to fear death. Look at this from Sir Henry Vane. I copy it from Morley's *Recollections* (Vol. II):

> Death holds a high place in the policy of great commonwealths of the world. . . . It is the part of a valiant and generous mind to prefer some things before life, as things for which a man should not doubt, nor fear to die. . . . True natural wisdom pursueth the learning and practice of dying well, as the very end of life, and indeed he hath not spent his life ill that hath learnt to die well. It is the chiefest thing and duty of life. The knowledge of dying is the knowledge of liberty, the state of true freedom, the way to fear nothing, to live well, contentedly, and peaceable. . . . It is a good time to die when to live is rather a burden than a blessing, and there is more ill in life than good.

"When his hour came, Vane's actual carriage on Tower Hill was as noble and resolute as his words" is Morley's commentary. There is not a single recruiting speech in which I have not laid the greatest stress upon this part of a warrior's duty. There is no speech in which I have yet said, "Let us go to kill the Germans." My refrain is, "Let us go and die for the sake of India and the Empire", and I feel that, supposing that the response to my call is overwhelming and we all go to France and turn the scales against the Germans, India will then have a claim to be heard and she may then dictate a peace that will last. Suppose further that I have succeeded in raising an army of fearless men, they fill the trenches and with hearts of love lay down their guns and challenge the Germans to shoot them—their fellow men—I say that even the German heart will melt. I refuse to credit it with exclusive fiendishness. So it comes to this, that under exceptional circumstances, war may have to be resorted to as a necessary evil, even as the body is. If the motive is right, it may be turned to the profit of mankind and that an ahimsaist may not stand aside and look on with indifference but must make his choice and actively co-operate or actively resist.

Your fear about my being engrossed in the political strife and intrigues may be entirely set aside. I have no stomach for them, least at the present moment, had none even in South Africa. I was in the political life because therethrough lay my own liberation. Montagu said, "I am surprised to find you taking part in the political life of the country!" Without a moment's thought I

replied, "I am in it because without it I cannot do my religious and social work," and I think the reply will stand good to the end of my life.

You can't complain of my having given you only a scrap of a letter. Instead of a letter, I have inflicted upon you what may almost read like an essay. But it was necessary that you should know what is passing in my mind at the present moment. You may now pronounce your judgment and mercilessly tear my ideas to pieces where you find them to be wrong.

I hope you are getting better and stronger. I need hardly say that we shall all welcome you when you are quite able to undertake a journey.

With love,

MOHAN

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

336. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING

NADIAD,
July 9, 1918

MY DEAR ESTHER,

Of course you were quite right in putting me the question you did. I am looking forward to your reply to my explanation.

I appreciate your preference for country life and country children. They are more innocent and hence more lovable.

Yes, it is your duty to continue your work to the end of your contract. I know the girls[1] will gain by your very contact. And for that matter I don't mind their receiving faulty education.

Devdas has just risen from a sick-bed. I know he will be delighted to meet you. Do please find him out, if he has not found you out. And if you have the time, I would like you to meet him as often as possible.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

My Dear Child, pp. 29-30

[1] Pupils in the Danish Mission Boarding School, Tirukoilur

337. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

[NADIAD,]
July 9, 1918

. . . What a proud thing it would be if we recruited and, at the same time, insisted on amendments in the Reform Scheme! . . .

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

338. LETTER TO DATTATREYA DABHOLKAR

[NADIAD,
July 9, 1918]

CHI. DATTATREYA,

I congratulate you on your standing first in the examination of standard five. I want that you should rank high in character just as you maintain the first place in your studies.

I was happy that you donated the first month's amount of the scholarship of the Ashram. When I go there, I shall explain to those in the Ashram the meaning of your gift. These generous inclinations which your father inculcates in you from this early age are a noble inheritance. See that you nourish them.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

339. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 9, 1918

CHI. DEVDAS,

Natesan's telegram today has relieved me of my anxiety in the absence of a letter from you. Find out the exact cause of illness and see that you do not fall ill again. What did the students of Hindi do during your illness? Did any of them continue to come to you? Were there any who continued their study?

I have not had a single recruit so far, so deplorable is the plight of the country.

The telegram you saw there was all a misunderstanding. This occurred because there was a recruiting officer of the Government who was my namesake. My failure so far suggests that people are not ready to follow my advice. They are ready, however, to accept my services in a cause which suits them. This is as it should be. It is through such service that one earns the right to give advice. Three years' service, and that too in different parts of the country, is not enough. Even then, on the question of recruitment I could have done nothing else. I needed the satisfaction of having taken the initiative on an occasion of this kind. My efforts continue. What I have said is about the results achieved so far.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

340. LETTER TO HARILAL GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 9, 1918

I have your letter. If it was cruel to say what I felt was true, then certainly my letter was cruel. I repeat that the world will most emphatically not consider you innocent. Whatever you may have said in your sincerity[1], Narottam Sheth could have had no idea about your speculation. You have followed one wrong thing with another. It was not enough for you that you had lost ten thousand rupees. But there is no use arguing with you. May God give you wisdom. If I have made a mistake, I will set it right. If you think you can point out any, do so even now.

I understand what you say about your enlisting. I made the suggestion at a time when I did not doubt your truthfulness. I do not think I have any interest in it now. I can give you no idea of what my condition has been since I began to doubt your truthfulness.

May God bless you, I pray, and show you the right path.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] The original is not clear at this point.

341. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 9, 1918

Please do everything necessary so that Shri Khushalbhai and Devbhabhi may have peace. I certainly fear that the fact of Prabhudas and others taking their meals there may have unwelcome results. It must be all very painful for Keshu and Radha. Use your judgment and do what you think best.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

342. LETTER TO A CO-WORKER

[NADIAD,]
July 10, 1918

I am in a fright about you. I am wrestling with Harilal as I am doing with you. He writes to say that the remedy I have suggested is cruel. How can I say that he is telling the truth, when I know that he is not? That is the position in which I find myself in relation to you. In your case, too, I see things turning to anger. You are charged with deception. That time you talked about my ideals. And now you write to say that you wasted your time even in going to . . .[1] Again, you have deceived me. You misled . . .[2] too. You put it to him that I should send him to Chinchvad. He told me this. I did not attach any weight to his words. As I remember these things now, I shiver. What shall I say to you? I am not fit to sit in judgment over you. It gives me pain to have to tell you that you have been lying. If a man like you is capable of deceiving and shirking work to this extent, whom else may one trust? If you have not been deceiving, how is it that suddenly I got such an impression? . . .[3] is not at fault. He only happened to be the immediate cause. My suspicion began when you did not remain in . . .[4] but I suppressed it the moment it occurred. I thought you would never act in that manner and dismissed the idea from my mind. But I was not

[1], [2], [3] & [4] Omissions are in the source.

satisfied. That suspicion and the discussion I have had with you come vividly before me. I am in a fright. Save me from this suffering. Establish your innocence fully or repent sincerely and learn to be straightforward. I cannot bear to go on suspecting you. I had built high hopes on you. I had visualized the foremost place for you in the future satyagrahi army of India. All this lies shattered at the moment.

From the Gujarati in the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

343. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

BOMBAY,
Ashadh Sud 6 [July 14, 1918]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I could not return [to the Ashram] after seeing Mr. Pratt, for I heard that Jagjivandas had been taken ill and I had to go to Nadiad. At Pratt's, a number of Englishmen surrounded me and started talking very pleasantly. They expressed a desire to go and see the Ashram. I invited them to come over on Saturday. Most probably, I shall be there. If I can start in time, I may arrive by the afternoon train on that day. Even if I don't, you should expect them. They may be there any time in the evening after five. I have told them that they would see things better if they could stay till prayer time. See that the boys, or the leading ones among them, are taught the English hymns. Sing *Lead Kindly Light*. If they come at five, show them the kitchen, etc., and the food.

I write this letter from Bombay. I came here directly from Karamsad. Tilak Maharaj is here. As it has been suggested to me that I should give out my views on the Reform Scheme only after seeing Tilak Maharaj in Bombay, I am busy seeing people. I shall be back in Nadiad on Wednesday evening. I shall leave here on Tuesday evening but shall be going to Godhra on my way. From there, I shall go to Nadiad the same day.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You must be putting the accounts in order. Get someone to help you in this, if necessary, and do so.

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 5732. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

344. SPEECH AT KARAMSAD[1]

July 14, 1918

[Gandhiji] said at the outset that he was there to give them an unpalatable dose and he hoped that they would not turn away from it all at once, bearing in mind that one of the principal characteristics of a self-governing and liberty-loving people was to give ear to all counsel and to choose one that appealed to them most. What, he asked them, was the meaning of swarajya?

Our villages are no better than dung-hills; we cannot defend ourselves and our families against robbers or wild beasts; *mukhis* and *rawanias* coerce and oppress us as they will; we have no arms and we do not know the use of arms. Is this swarajya? And yet, this is the natural order throughout India. Imagine the tidiness and the atmosphere of quiet and healthy independence of an English village and think how miserably an Indian village compares with it. It is because every Englishman can stand on his legs and can defend his home and his village against any invader that the English village appears so incomparably superior to ours.

The first essential of swarajya is, thus, the power of self-protection. I am fit for swarajya only when I am able to defend myself and to shed my blood for my country, and India could be said to be living only if five lakhs of men lay down their lives for her. A seed must lose itself in earth in order that numerous seeds may spring up from it. Even so, from the ashes of the thousands dying for India, will spring up a living India. We Indians visit temples every morning and evening and pay our obeisance to gods—gods who, we say, descend on earth to protect the weak and succour the oppressed, when virtue subsides and vice prevails. It then ill becomes us to go to these temples, if we have not the spirit and the capacity of self-defence in us. And what verily did our Ramachandra and Krishna do? They modelled heroes out of common clay and equipped them for self-defence. The golden opportunity for acquiring the power of self-defence has come to us and it behoves us to seize it and profit by it. An Empire that has been defending India and of which India aspires to be the equal partner is in great peril and it ill befits India to stand aloof at the

[1] This was Gandhiji's third speech in the recruiting campaign delivered in Karamsad, a village in the Anand taluka of Kheda district.

hour of its destiny. The argument that a Government that had behaved unsympathetically towards us does not deserve any help is idle, because helping the Government means nothing but helping ourselves. And India too is under grave stress. India would be nowhere without Englishmen. If the British do not win, whom shall we go to for claiming equal partnership? Shall we go to the victorious German, or the Turk or the Afghan for it? We shall have no right to do so; the victorious nation will set its mind on imposing taxes, on repressing, harassing and tyrannizing over the vanquished. Only after making its position secure will it listen to our demands, whereas the liberty-loving English will surely yield, when they have seen that we have laid down our lives for them. The thought that our hearths, our homes, our fields and cattle will go to rack and ruin if we all go to the war, need not stop us. Our old men and women will take care of these, as they naturally must, and it will be a great training for them. One feeling and one only should be uppermost in the mind of each of us : No one dare invade my country; if he does, he dare take nothing out of it, excepting my dead body fallen in defence thereof.

Towards the conclusion, he reiterated that enlistment was the surest and the straightest way to self-government and he exhorted the brave people of Karamsad, who had acquitted themselves so splendidly during the Kaira campaign, to send at least a hundred men to the war.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-7-1918

345. LETTER TO HANUMANTRAO

July 17, 1918

I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time, but my recruiting peregrinations have seriously interfered with my correspondence. Today happens to be an off day, and is being devoted to letter-writing. I thank you most heartily for all you have done and are doing for Devdas. In every one of his letters Devdas has mentioned your affection for him. In his illness, he tells me, you have been a real friend. I shall now select Hindi candidates for Tamil tuition.

I knew that my recruiting campaign was bound to pain friends for a variety of reasons, political as well as religious. But I know that both are wrong in their condemnation. My views have been before the country for a long time. But it is always one's action that matters, rarely one's speech. But I may not therefore summarily

dismiss their objections. They are honest in their statement and they criticize out of affection. It is my practice of ahimsa and failure to get our people even to understand the first principles of ahimsa that have led to the discovery that all killing is not *himsa*, that, sometimes, practice of ahimsa may even necessitate killing and that we as a nation have lost the true power of killing. It is clear that he who has lost the power to kill cannot practice non-killing. Ahimsa is a renunciation of the highest type. A weak and an effeminate nation cannot perform this grand act of renunciation, even as a mouse cannot be properly said to renounce the power of killing a cat. It may look terrible but it is true that we must, by a well-sustained, conscious effort, regain this power, and, then, if we can only do so, deliver the world from its travail of *himsa* by a continuous abdication of this power. I cannot describe to you in sufficiently telling language the grief I often used to feel as I watched my failure to carry conviction about ahimsa even to the members of the Ashram. Not that they were unwilling listeners, but I could perceive, as I now think plainly, that they had not the capacity for apprehending the truth. It was like singing the finest music to ears untuned to any music. But today practically everyone at the Ashram understands it, and is aglow with the expectation that ahimsa is a renunciation out of strength and not out of weakness. It is not possible to make any distinction between organized warfare and individual fighting. There must be an organized opposition and, therefore, even organized bloodshed, say, in the case of bandits. The noblest warrior is he who stands fearless in the face of immense odds. He then feels not the power to kill, but he is supremely triumphant in the knowledge that he has the willingness to die when by taking to his heels he might easily have saved his life. I do believe that we shall have to teach our children the art of self-defence. I see more and more clearly that we shall be unfit for swaraj for generations to come if we do not regain the power of self-defence. This means for me a rearrangement of so many ideas about self-development and India's development. I must not carry the point further than I have done today. You are an earnest seeker. I am most anxious that you should understand this new view of ahimsa. It is not a fall but it is a rise. The measure of love evoked by this discovery is infinitely greater than ever it was before.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

346. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI[1]

[NADIAD,]
July 17, 1918

DEAR MR. SHASTRIAR,

I am glad you were able to go to Bombay. I think it will be most valiant of you if you can attend the Congress[2]. I must confess I sympathize with the Panditji's attitude if it is truly reported of him. Indeed, for him it will be one of the boldest acts of his life to refrain from appearing on a Congress platform. What I feel is this. How can I appear in an assembly which I know is to be misled and in which the principal movers do not believe what they say and will *denounce* in the Press the very Resolutions for which they would have voted! I know there is the other side. But, for the moment, I lean towards abstention. I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

347. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

[NADIAD,]
July 18, 1918

You have pressed me for my opinion on the Reform Scheme[3] just published. As you know, I did not feel called upon to take an active part in the framing of the Congress-League scheme. I have not taken an all-absorbing interest in controversial politics

[1] This was in reply to Sastri's letter which said: "I marvel at Mrs. Besant and Tilak taking a position very near yours and mine after having written as they have done in the Press. I do not like all this talk about abstention from the Congress. I do not understand it."

[2] The special session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay on August 29—September 1, which, it was feared, might create a schism on the issue of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, but actually adopted a policy which commanded wide support.

[3] Sastri had invited Gandhiji's views for publication in *The Servant of India.*

I do not pretend that even now I have studied the reform proposals as a keen politician would. I feel, therefore, very great hesitation in expressing my opinion on it. But I recognize the weight of your argument in favour of my expressing such opinion as I can form on the scheme.

In my opinion, then, as an artistic production, the scheme now published is superior to the Congress-League scheme. I further consider that both Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford have been inspired by an honest desire for a due fulfilment of the declaration of the 20th August and for the welfare of India. They have taken great pains over their most difficult and delicate task and I cannot but think that any hasty rejection of their effort will be a misfortune for the country. In my humble opinion, the scheme deserves a sympathetic handling rather than a summary rejection. But it would need to be considerably improved before it is accepted by the reformers. After all, our standard of measurement must be the Congress-League scheme, crude though it is. I think that we should with all the vehemence and skill that we can command press for the incorporation into it of the essentials of our own.

I would, therefore, for instance, ask for the rejection of the doctrine of compartments. I very much fear that the dual system in provinces will be fatal to the success of the experiment, and as it may be only success of the experiment that can take us to the next—and I hope the final stage, we cannot be too insistent that the idea of reservation should be dropped. One cannot help noticing an unfortunate suspicion of our intentions regarding the purely British, as distinguished from the purely Indian interest. Hence there is to be seen in the scheme elaborate reservations on behalf of these interests. I think that more than anything else it is necessary to have an honest, frank and straightforward understanding about these interests and for me, personally, this is of much greater importance than any legislative feat that British talent alone or a combination of British and Indian talent may be capable of performing. I would certainly, in as courteous terms as possible but equally emphatic, say that these interests will be held subservient to those of India as a whole and that, therefore, they are certainly in jeopardy in so far as they may be inconsistent with the general advance of India. Thus, if I had my way, I would cut down the military expenditure. I would protect local industries by heavily taxing goods that compete against products of our industries, and I would reduce to a minimum the British element in our services, retaining only those that may be needed for our instruction and guidance. I do not think that they had or have any claims upon

our attention save by right of conquest. That claim must clearly go by the board as soon as we are awakened to a consciousness of our national existence and possess the strength to vindicate our right to the restoration of what we have lost. To their credit let it be said that they do not themselves advance any claim by right of conquest. One can readily join in the tribute of praise bestowed upon the Indian Civil Service for their devotion to duty and great organizing ability. So far as material reward is concerned, that service has been more than handsomely paid and our gratitude otherwise can be best expressed by assimilating their virtues ourselves.

No scheme of reform can possibly benefit India that does not recognize that the present administration is top heavy and ruinously expensive and for me even law, order and good government would be too dearly purchased if the price to be paid for it is to be the grinding poverty of the masses. The watchword of our reform councils will have to be, not increase of taxation for the growing needs of a growing country, but a decrease of the financial burdens that are sapping the foundation itself of the organic growth. If this fundamental fact is recognized, there need be no suspicion of our motives and, I think I am perfectly safe in asserting that in every other respect British interests will be as secure in Indian hands as they are in their own. It follows from what I have said above that we must respectfully press for the Congress-League claim for the immediate granting to Indians of 50 per cent of the higher posts in the Civil Service. The above is but an indication of my view on the scheme. It is a considered view so far as it goes, but it does not embody all the improvements that I should suggest for submission to His Majesty's Government. In due course, I take it, we shall endeavour to issue a representative criticism of the scheme. It is, therefore, hardly necessary for me to enter into an exhaustive treatment even if I was capable of doing so.

I cannot, however, conclude my observations without stating what I consider to be the best means of enforcing our opinion, whatever shape it may finally take. I entirely endorse the concluding remarks of the authors of the historic document that thousands of Indian reformers are today studying with avidity. "If anything could enter the sense of responsibility under which our recommendations are made, in a matter fraught with consequences so immense, it would be the knowledge that, even as we are bringing our report to an end, far greater issues still hang in the balance upon the battle-field of France. It is there and not in Delhi or Whitehall that the ultimate decision of India's future will be

taken." May God grant us, Home Rulers, the wisdom to see this simple truth. The gateway to our freedom is situated on the French soil. No victory worth the name has yet been won without the shedding of blood. If we could but crowd the battle-fields of France with an indomitable army of Home Rulers fighting for victory for the cause of the Allies, it will also be a fight for our own cause. We would then have made out an unanswerable case for the granting of Home Rule not in any distant time or near future but immediately. My advice, therefore, to the country would be, fight unconditionally unto death with the Briton for the victory and agitate simultaneously also unto death, if we must, for the reforms that we deserve. This is the surest method of gaining an honourable victory for ourselves over the strongest opposition of bureaucratic forces and, at the end of it, there would be no ill will left. It may not be impossible to gain our end by sheer obstructive and destructive agitation. But it is easy enough to see that we shall at the same time reap ill will between the British and the Indian elements, not a particularly cohesive cement for binding would-be partners.

The Leader, 24-7-1918

348. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

NADIAD,
Ashadh Shukla 10 [July 18, 1918]

DEAR JAMNALALJI,

I returned from Bombay last night. Being on tour I could not write to you earlier. Your letter has taken a burden off my mind. Bhai Ambalalji has sent Rs. 5,000 and Bhai Shankarlal Banker has given Rs. 4,000. I feel some hesitation in speaking of my wants to friends who do not turn down my requests and yet I cannot help making them. I therefore strongly feel that, when there is any difficulty in conceding my request, it will be a kindness to me not to grant it.

I hope your pain has now completely disappeared.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2840

349. LETTER TO ANANDSHANKAR DHRUVA

[NADIAD,]
July 18, 1918

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. How is it that, in all your wide studies, you have not discovered any medicine which would ensure that, no matter if relations died or fell ill, if a window-shutter in a railway compartment crashed on one's hand or if one stumbled while walking, —one would not mind any of these things but be always happy? Can studies, however, relieve the pain in the hand, or is it only a doctor who can help? You need reply only when we meet, after you have recovered. The workers are patient and will wait. If prayers can avail, please pray that your hand may be soon restored to a serviceable condition. Meanwhile, many of them have been receiving not 35 but 50 per cent increase. Ambalalbhai said he had something to whisper to you. He has already done so to me. But you had better hear it direct from him.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

350. LETTER TO JAGJIVANDAS MEHTA

[NADIAD,]
July 18, 1918

Got your letter. I was sorry to hear of the theft of your coat and money. It is as if a weak cow should be infested with too many gadflies.[1] There is a thief around here in the Anathashram. The thing has happened twice or thrice before now. Somebody should have warned you but it seems this did not occur to anyone.

[1] A Gujarati saying, meaning: "Misfortunes never come singly." Mehta had gone to Nadiad to see Gandhiji and had fallen ill while in the Anathashram. His coat, with a purse in it, was stolen.

Your fever must have left you completely. I could write to Jivraj[1] only today. The letter is enclosed. You may despatch it if you think it proper.

I could, this time, get some idea of the condition of your business. I am not happy about the source of the money with which you have started it. If my advice is of any value, wind up your business this very day, return the money to the person from whom you have borrowed it and secure a job. I am sure you will have no difficulty in getting one. If you would live the simple life, the Ashram is always open to you. I do not press, though. If, however, you want to work for things which the world regards worth striving for, you may, but on your own strength. The longer you take to act in this matter, the more reason you will have for regret afterwards.

Everywhere people bring misery on themselves by their own actions but, the more I look into the net in which your family affairs are caught, the more I realize this to be especially true of you all. I wish you would free yourself from this. Be satisfied with the normal risks which attend an enterprise and do not go in for anything more. See that your relations with everyone are above reproach. As for father, he goes out of his way to heap misery upon misery on himself. Living a life of religious devotion, why should he have so many desires? Why should you encourage him in them? . . . .[2] We should be happier than the gods if we respected the voice of conscience as much as we respect public opinion. We don't recognize the happiness at our door-step and go searching for it in all directions. Why do you bother yourself so?

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Jivraj Mehta, Gandhiji's friend and physician

[2] Some words are omitted here in the source.

351. LETTER TO MRS. JAGJIVANDAS MEHTA

NADIAD
July 18, 191[8]

DEAR SISTER,

I could not bear to see your distress but, at the same time the innocent happiness I noticed in you I saw neither in father[1] nor in Bhai Jagjivandas. This cut me to the quick and I have addressed a letter[2] to Bhai Jagjivandas. You should, both of you get it by heart, deeply ponder over it and then strive jointly in life. The letter is meant for you both.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

352. LETTER TO KOTWAL'S SISTER[3]

NADIAD
Ashadh Sud 10 [July 18, 1918]

DEAR SISTER,

I have your postcard. Gogate's did not reach me. It may have been lost because of my wanderings. When I wrote to you, I had not plunged into this arduous war effort. Now, I don't know when I shall rest in the Ashram. If you go to stay there in my absence, you are likely to find things difficult; besides I think your presence will also embarrass the Ashram inmates. At present, it does not have enough room either. We have not been able to go ahead with construction as fast as I had hoped to. Hence, I hesitate to welcome you. If, however, you can endure the inconveniences there, accept human nature in all its variety and do not think my presence essential even when you are there for the first time, you may go. Discuss the matter with Kotwal if he is there and write to me afterwards. He will explain to you what I have written. I do want you in the Ashram. All tha

[1] Mrs. Mehta's father-in-law

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] The source does not mention the addressee's name. But from the references to Gogate and Kotwal, the letter appears to have been addressed the latter's sister; *vide* "Letter to Rambhau Gogate", 17-5-1918.

I desire is that you may go there after it has developed such an atmosphere that you will never feel like leaving it.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G. N. 3617

353. SPEECH AT NADIAD[1]

July 18, 1918

He pointed out how two hundred years of disease had weakened the martial spirit of the people of Gujarat and emphasized the necessity of recognizing this fact as a preliminary to the work of recruitment. While fully appreciating the difficulties before him, he was determined to see them through, as he had recognized since he attended the Delhi War Conference that recruiting work was the first duty of an Indian patriot in these times. He had received invitations from many parts of India to go and help them in their recruiting campaign, but he could not do so with a clear conscience while his own people of Gujarat hung back.

The Bombay Chronicle, 22-7-1918

354. APPEAL FOR ENLISTMENT

NADIAD,
July 22, 1918

LEAFLET NO. 2

It is a month today since the first leaflet[2] was written. During that time my fellow workers and myself have had a good deal of experience. We held meetings at Nadiad, Karamsad, Ras, Kathlal, Jambusar and other places and talked with hundreds of men and women.

I take the liberty to put before you the experiences we have had. Barely a hundred men have come forward. I find this to be too small a figure, considering the one month that has gone into it and the travelling it has entailed. When I think of the condition of the people, I feel that it is a wonder that even so

[1] The meeting was presided over by F. G. Pratt, Commissioner of the Northern Division, and attended by a large number of District officials and leading citizens.

[2] *Vide* "Appeal for Enlistment", 22-6-1918.

many men have come forward. These are men from a class of society which has not seen any fighting, men who have never so much as lifted a stick. So, if we could but rouse the fighting classes, an inexhaustible supply of recruits could be assured.

The shortcomings of the thinking sections are plain on this occasion. I use the word "thinking" in place of "educated". If such men and women were to do their duty, they could influence the classes fitted by nature to join up. My experience goes to testify to a great weakness on the part of the thinking section. Their not taking sufficient interest in national work makes the task of recruitment difficult. Those among them into whose hands this leaflet may find its way should, if they have faith in this work, prepare themselves and inspire the illiterate and ignorant sections for this great task.

But, in the thinking section I have come across persons who have no faith in this. This leaflet is addressed to them. It is my request to them to read it carefully. It is up to the wise man to sketch out the right line of action in the light of existing circumstances. If it is our intention to break off our connection with the British, to be sure we must not go to their help. Very few come out with the opinion that we do want to break this tie. It is plain enough to everyone that even those who are for breaking it just cannot do so at the present moment. Be that as it may, today our salvation lies in helping the British. To help them is to help ourselves. When the interests of the two lie in the same direction, it would be the very height of recklessness for either side to keep thinking of the other's faults and refuse to go to its help. If a raid were to descend on an enemy of ours in the village in which we are living, and if it threatened the whole village, we would forget our enmity and run to the succour of that enemy and beat back the raiders. The same holds true in this war today. To rise against the common danger is not only expediency but our duty as well. Another objection that has been raised is : what kind of a dharma is it to send the best of our men to the war and get them killed? This way, all those who are working for swaraj may be killed; how would we win swaraj, then? I would have branded this objection as ridiculous had it not been raised by men considered intelligent. It is clear that, if India could boast of only five lakhs of men demanding swaraj, we do not deserve it. But those who raise the objection mean to say that, whatever be the number of such men, the discerning few who carry on an agitation for swaraj number even less than five lakhs. This is true enough. Only, one thing is overlooked. In preparing five lakhs of men who would

be willing to fight to death, we shall have made fifty lakhs familiar with "war", "swaraj", etc. We want to train five lakhs of free men. They will be going with open eyes, of their own free will. They will have taken counsel with their friends and relations; so the five lakhs who depart will have left behind them lakhs of other like-minded people. The plain fact is that we have lost the very capacity to fight and our valour has ebbed away. We don't have the strength even to protect our women-folk. Running after so-called dharma, we forgot the claim of karma (duty). We cannot stand up and fight even if there is a raid on our village in broad daylight. That some eight men can pillage a population of a thousand with impunity can happen—in all the world—only in India. Those in the villages are not so weak of body that they cannot beat back a mere eight. But they stand in terrible fear of death. "Who would risk his life or limb by going out to fight? Let them loot. Leave it to the Government, whose job it is." So they think and stay at home. If the house of a neighbour is set on fire, if he is dishonoured and his property looted, that is no concern of these philosophers. So long as this philosophy (darkness) has not perished, India will never know genuine peace. That we should have to wait for the arrival of the police or the army before the village becomes safe is an intolerable situation for anyone with self-respect. An instant means of getting out of this predicament is ready at hand. By enlisting in the army, we shall learn the use of weapons, shall have the spirit of patriotism kindled in us and shall be strong enough to defend our villages.

What about our wives and children if we go? Everyone will naturally ask this question. A recruit gets a fixed pay, in addition to food and clothing. The minimum he gets is eighteen rupees and, according to merit, he rises in rank and scale. If he is killed, the Government provides for the maintenance of his wife and children. Those who return from the war get prizes and rewards. It is my view that, in the final analysis, soldiering is more paying than other professions.

"But such privileges are available only to the British; when do they ever come to us?"—I have heard people say. To them I would say: "It is not likely that an army of five lakhs of intelligent men raised by our efforts would be denied equal rights with the British. If they should be, that would only go to prove the incapacity of those five lakhs and of the leaders. If an army of five lakhs were raised, it would be a match for the British army and would win equal rights. The very fact of our having raised an army of five lakhs will ensure the rights."

"You bid us to go and join the war unconditionally. Another advises us to join on promise of equal rights. A third says we are not bound to go—why bargain away your sleep and go out of your way to suffer sleeplessness? We get confused by these three different counsels. In such a predicament, it seems to us tha discretion lies in not venturing beyond our depths." My modes reply to this is : "Sentiments such as these bespeak a coward. A time passes, different parties will come into being and a variety o opinions come to prevail. You will have to take them all int consideration. I would call it a betrayal of the swaraj to whicl we are all pledged if we refuse to participate in the war at any rat for the sake of that pledge."

In laying down conditions for joining the army, there is a dange that the occasion to join may slip past and the scheme fo swaraj may be shelved. The security of our nation, as also th certainty of swaraj, lies only in our joining up. All the partie would agree that our enlisting in the army will in no way harr the cause of swaraj. So, even on a comparative view, of the thre the one counsel which advocates enlistment seems to me the bes It is my hope that the comrades of Kheda district will be true t the call of duty and give their names to the volunteers or send ther directly to the Ashram.

Women will also, I trust, help in this work. I know that som of them dissuade their husbands and sons from enlisting. If the reflect over the matter carefully enough, they will see that it is i their own interests, and certainly in the interests of the nation, th their husbands and sons should be brave men.

For ever your servant,
MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDI

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

355. LETTER TO ESTHER FAERING

BOMBAY,
July 22, 1918

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have been debating with myself whether to write to you or not to. Your letter made painful reading. I am today at the Ashram and have just worn the second vest sent by you. I came to know of it only today. It does not fit well. The sleeves are too short. But that matters little. I am wearing it and shall wear it out.

I am quite sure that you must quietly go through your contract even though you may be prohibited from coming to the Ashram or writing to me. You will gain greater strength of will and purpose by the enforced discipline and restraint.

It will be a privilege if you are permitted to write to me and receive letters. Do please tell me what final decision has been arrived at.

I have suspended Civil Disobedience for the time being. You will see my letter to the Press.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

My Dear Child, pp. 30-1

356. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MRS. POLAK

[BOMBAY,]
July 22, 1918

DEAR MRS. POLAK,

. . . I am undergoing a revolution in my outlook upon life. As it seems to me some old cobwebs are falling away. But of this when I have more time.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

357. LETTER TO GOVIND MALAVIYA

[BOMBAY,]
July 22, 1918

I was very glad to get your letter. We can lay bare our heart to those whom we consider our elders. Such laying bare is necessary. You have done right in writing to me. I do not know what excesses are committed in recruitment. If they are many, it is all the more necessary for me to go in for it.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme is, in my opinion, very good. We can have its shortcomings removed through agitation. Whatever the merits of the Scheme, however, I definitely hold that we should join the war. We do not join it for the good of the British people; we want to go in for recruitment to do service to the country, and with an eye to its interests. What shall I say about the miserable plight of India? I see clearly that India cannot attain real swarajya. I hold that by joining the army we can accomplish two things : we shall become brave and we shall learn something about the handling of arms; and we shall prove our worth by helping those with whom we wish to become partners. Resisting their excesses and sharing their troubles—both these things are worth our doing. I want you to think very calmly on this question. I suggest your sending this letter to Devdas and also discussing the matter with him.

Yours sincerely,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

358. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI SHAH

[BOMBAY,]
July 22, 1918

DEAR PUNJABHAI,

What we have taken as dharma is not dharma. We commit violence on a large scale in the name of non-violence. Fearing to shed blood, we torment people every day and dry up their blood. A *Bania*[1] can never practise non-violence. Dharma does not consist in the outward renunciation practised by some *Shravakas*[2] or in feeding ants. There can be no *moksha* or knowledge of the Self unless one renounces love of body. If you are convinced of this and would discover the true road to *moksha*, I should advise you to identify yourself with the Ashram. See the proposed construction work through and relieve Maganlal for the present. You will need a servant. Engage Parasaram. I think it necessary that Maganlal be relieved. Think over this carefully. Undertake this only if the truth of this is as clear to you as daylight. If it is, you will experience great peace in the Ashram. Otherwise you will tire out soon. You, Fulchand and Maganlal may discuss this among yourselves. But, first, think over it yourself.

Pious remembrances from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

359. *LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

NAVAGAM,
Purnima [*July 23, 1918*]

DEAR MAHADEV,

The result of your losing your temper was that you could not come, nor could Shivabhai. We two enjoyed walking down to to this place. We arrived at 10.15. The people were surprised. The poison which the Circle Inspector has sown here must be dug out. We shall, therefore, stay on here for three or four days. You or Shivabhai may bring over the mail.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Inform Anasuyabehn that we are here up to Thursday at any rate.

Bring, or send, postal covers, postcards and plain envelopes.

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 5790. Courtesy: C. K. Bhatt

360. *LETTER TO SIR S. SUBRAMANIAM*

[NAVAGAM,]
July 24, 1918

DEAR SIR SUBRAMANIAM[1],

I hope you will not regard this letter as a presumption on my part. I have long felt that your language was unrestrained and not worthy of a *yogi*. Your charges have appeared to me to be in many respects reckless. In my humble opinion you would have rendered much greater service to the country than you have if you had been as scrupulously truthful as you have been frank and fearless. In you an unguarded and uncharitable expression would be an untruth. Your politics are not of the demagogue. They are religious. I beseech you to give the country a pure example of an Indian gentleman. It is in your power to do so.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Retired Judge, Madras High Court

361. LETTER TO VINOBA BHAVE

[NAVAGAM,]
July 24, 1918

I have your thought-provoking letter.

The ideal is of course what you have stated. It is also true that, to achieve it, there should be a Gujarati teacher. But in the absence of such a teacher, it would not be wrong to avail ourselves of a teacher from Maharashtra. Also, I would prefer a Marathi teacher who has character, to a Gujarati who has none. At present it is difficult to find Gujaratis who can teach according to my method. The situation is so pathetic that, without you, Sanskrit teaching will have to stop or be resumed by Kaka[1]. For the present, therefore, you will have to continue teaching it while keeping the ideal in view.

I am eager to enter Maharashtra, but the time is not ripe yet. I am not fit. We don't have the required number of men. May there not be some divine providence in the fact that you, Kaka and Mama have come to work with me? My relations with Deshpande[2], my faith in the Servants of India Society, my especial admiration for Maharashtra, the great assistance they rendered in Champaran, the arrival of a music expert from Maharashtra, the expected entry, in the near future, of Kotwal's sister, my acquaintance with Narayanrao—all these things suggest that I am likely to do something special in Maharashtra, be it ever so little. However, "if man had his way, none would remain in misery, everyone would kill his enemies and see that only his friends remained." And so, this ambition notwithstanding, who knows what will happen?

I will keep your wishes in mind. I also desire to keep you close to me but I see that it cannot be at present. You are certainly an inmate of the Ashram; there can be no doubt about that.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Kaka Kalelkar

[2] Keshavrao Deshpande, Bar-at-law; founder of Ganganath Bharati Vidyalaya

362. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NAVAGAM,]
July 24, 1918

CHI. DEVDAS,

This letter brings you extremely distressing news. Bhai Sorabji passed away in Johannesburg after a brief but severe illness. We have, in some measure at least, risen above the fear of death and yet a death such as this cannot but grieve. Everyone had hoped that Sorabji would act as a shield in South Africa and do great things, but this hope now lies shattered. There is gloom in South Africa, as I can gather from the telegrams received from there. God's ways are inscrutable. Karma can never be undone. All action bears fruit, good or bad, and what we call an accident is not one in fact. It but seems so to us. No one dies before his time. Death, besides, is only the final transformation of the same entity, it is not a total annihilation. The *atman* is immortal. Even the transformation is only of the body. The state changes, not the *atman*. Knowing all this should be enough to console us; whether or no we have digested this knowledge is tested at a moment like the present one. Sorabji has become immortal. All he did was for the glory of his native land. If we but go on doing our duty, his passing away should make no difference to us. When the deaths of dear ones make us more keenly alive to our duty, separation from them causes no pain.

BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

363. LETTER TO BALVANTRAI THAKORE

[NAVAGAM,]
July 24, 1918

Your letter. I see that it will be necessary to agitate for introducing a new section in the Penal Code when we have a Parliament of our own. When two parties know the same Indian language, and one of them writes to the other or talks with him in English, the party so doing will be liable to a minimum of six months' rigorous imprisonment. Let me know what you think of such a section and also, before we gain swaraj, what action should meanwhile be taken against those who commit the offence.

I have understood your view on how military expenditure can be reduced. But swaraj is far away yet. Much will depend upon the situation obtaining at the time we get it.

Cannot we gradually prepare for self-government? To my mind, this is a status which from its very nature can be attained only gradually. A marriage must be preceded by engagement. In England, there is always a long period of courting. Either way, the simile of marriage seems to be inapt. A revolution is a sudden change and such a change never occurs in a peaceful manner. Hence a peaceful revolution is a contradiction in terms. India wants both peace and revolution. How is this possible?

I understand your desire that no public use should be made of your letter. We [both] wish that, after some time, there should be no need to use the word "private".

I am here today for some inquiry in the villages. Having a little time on hand, I permitted myself this banter as well. But something remains yet. As you are still unconvinced that the agitation in Kheda was justified, I invite you, on behalf of the people, to come over here to see things for yourself and have your doubts removed. You are the only person, among those whom I know, whose doubt still persists.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

364. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

NAVAGAM,
Thursday [*July 25, 1918*]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

You have been frightened by Raojibhai as he was by me. He read too much into my words.

No, my ideals have not changed. Despite my bitter experiences in India, my conviction remains the same as ever, that we have but little to learn from the West. The evils I have seen here have made no change in my fundamental idea nor has this war. The old idea has developed into something purer. I have certainly not come to feel that we shall have to introduce Western civilization. Nor do I suppose that we shall have to take to drinking and meat-eating. To be sure, I have felt, in all seriousness, that Swaminaryana[1] and Vallabhacharya[2] have robbed us of our manliness. They made the people incapable of self-defence. It was all to the good, of course, that people gave up drinking, smoking, etc; this, however, is not an end in itself, it is only a means. If a smoker happens to be a man of character, his company is worth cultivating. If, on the contrary, a man who has never smoked in his life is an adulterer, he can be of little service. The love taught by Swaminarayana and Vallabh is all sentimentalism. It cannot make one a man of true love. Swaminarayana and Vallabh simply did not reflect over the true nature of non-violence. Non-violence consists in holding in check all impulses in the *chitta*[3]. It comes into play especially in men's relations with one another. There is not even a suggestion of this idea in their writings. Having been born in this degenerate age of ours, they could not remain unaffected by its atmosphere and had, in consequence, quite an undesirable effect on Gujarat. Tukaram and Ramdas had no such effect. The *abhangas* of the former and the *shlokas* of the latter admit ample scope for manly striving. They, too, were *Vaishnavas*. Do not mix up the *Vaishnava* tradition with the teaching of Vallabh and Swaminarayana. Vaishnavism is

[1] Swami Sahajanand (1781-1833); founder of a *Vaishnava* sect of this name

[2] 1473-1531; teacher, principally responsible for spreading the *bhakti* cult in Gujarat

[3] Mind

an age-old truth. I have come to see, what I did not so clearly before, that there is non-violence in violence. This is the big change which has come about. I had not fully realized the duty of restraining a drunkard from doing evil, of killing a dog in agony or one infected with rabies. In all these instances, violence is in fact non-violence. Violence is a function of the body. *Brahmacharya* consists in refraining from sexual indulgence, but we do not bring up our children to be impotent. They will have observed *brahmacharya* only if, though possessed of the highest virility, they can master the physical urge. In the same way, our offspring must be strong in physique. If they cannot completely renounce the urge to violence, we may permit them to commit violence, to use their strength to fight and thus make them non-violent. Non-violence was taught by a Kshatriya to a Kshatriya.

The difference between the West and the East is what I have explained it to be,[1] and it is a great one. The civilization of the West is based on self-indulgence, ours on self-control. If we commit violence, it will be as a last resort and with a view to *lokasangraha*[2]. The West will indulge in violence in self-will. My taking part in [the movement for] a Parliament and similar activities is not a new development; it is quite an old thing and is only intended to ensure a check on these bodies. You will see this if you read my article on Mr. Montagu's scheme. I simply cannot bring myself to take interest in the movement, but I can spread my ideals by working in it. When I saw that I could continue in it only by sacrificing my ideals, I decided to retire from the movement.

I think you have your reply in what I have said. I cannot explain much when I am there for a day and so I have set down the thing in writing. This will enable you to think and ask me questions, if fresh doubts occur to you.

I continue to be in Navagam. I wanted to leave here today, but perhaps I may not be able to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] *Vide* "Speech on Indian Civilization", 30-3-1918.

[2] That which promotes the conservation of society; *vide Bhagavad Gita*, III: 20.

365. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI PATEL

[NAVAGA
July 25, 19

DEAR RAOJIBHAI,

I did not mind your letter. You may ask any questions y have. And I shall give you a written reply so that you may ha something to think over. I know very well that you are doi your whole duty by Manibhai and the boys. That is what reconci me to separation from you. I think that by living with them y would harm both yourself and them. You will not be servi Vimala's[1] interests by staying in Sojitra and carrying out Manibha wishes in all matters. On the contrary, you will be able to ser everybody by staying away and strengthening your character thı ugh *tapascharya*. Against Manibhai, you are only offering satyagra and satyagraha can never be wrong. It is not any ill-will towar Manibhai but your love for him which keeps you away. Mirak forsook her husband out of her love and so, in his love, d Lord Buddha leave his devoted wife and his parents. What is tr for you is also true for Shivabhai. Supposing you return from t war unhurt, may it not be that things will have changed for t better for you, that you will be in a better position then to lo after the children? We are not joining the army for the pleasu of doing so but to seek an end to our agony and that of tl country. Even if we commit an error in pursuit of this aim, no har is done.

You are not likely to get peace by seeing me. While we a engaged in cleaning things up, there is bound to be commotio We must find peace in the midst of it all. When washing cloth we strike them but feel happy doing so because we know that tl makes them clean.

Vandemataram fr
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] Addressee's daughter

366. THE LATE SORABJI SHAPURJI ADAJANIA

[NADIAD,]
July 27, 1918

THE EDITOR
THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE

SIR,

One of the best of Indians has just passed away in Johannesburg in the person of Sorabji Shapurji of Adajan, near Surat, at the age of thirty-five. And it is my mournful duty to pay a humble tribute to a fellow-worker. Mr. Sorabji, though known to a select company of friends, was unknown to the Indian public. His work lay in South Africa. He was a prince among passive resisters. He joined their ranks when the struggle in South Africa was at its highest and when it had travelled beyond the confines of the Transvaal. When he joined the struggle, I must confess, I had my doubts about his ability to go through it. But he soon made his mark as a front-rank satyagrahi. Neither he nor I ever expected that he would have to undergo a series of imprisonments amounting in all to over 18 months with hard labour. But he went through it manfully and cheerfully. Mr. Sorabji was a small trader when he took to public life in South Africa. He had a High School education. But such as it was, he made the most effective use of it in the Transvaal. During the struggle, he showed a steadfastness of purpose, probity of character, coolness of temper, courage in the midst of adverse circumstances, such as the best of us do not often show. There were occasions when the stoutest hearts might have broken—Sorabji never wavered.

After the struggle was closed, it was my intention to send to England some one from among a band of young Indians who had proved themselves capable warriors. A friend had offered the needful funds. The choice, for a variety of reasons, fell upon Mr. Sorabji. It was a question, whether having abandoned the life of a student for over eight years, he could take to it again. He was, however, determined. His ambition was to become a barrister and fit himself for fuller service. To England he went. He had come in close touch with Mr. Gokhale when he was in South Africa. He came in closer touch in London. And I knew that Mr. Gokhale had the highest opinion of Mr. Sorabji's worth. He had invited him to become a member of his Society. The deceased

took an active part in all the leading movements among Indians in London. He was for some time Secretary of the London Indian Society. He was the first to join the Indian Ambulance Corps that was formed in London at the inauguration of the war and served at Netley, nursing the sick and the wounded. After being called to the Bar, he proceeded to South Africa, where he intended to practise the profession and return to India after he had given a number of years to South Africa and found a substitute. But alas fate has willed it otherwise and a career full of promise had to come to an abrupt end. The deceased was only 35 when he died

In all I have said above, I have hardly described the man in Sorabji. He was faithful to a degree. He was a true Parsee because he was a true Indian. He knew no distinctions of creed or caste. Love of India was a passion with him, her service an article of faith. He was indeed a rare man. He leaves a young widow to mourn his death. I am sure there are many friends of Sorabji to share her grief.

Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-7-1918

367. LETTER TO SIR WILLIAM VINCENT

NADIAD
July 27, 1918

TO
THE HONOURABLE SIR W. H. VINCENT, KT., K.C.S.I.

I thank you for your letter dated the 22nd instant. I venture to hope that the tribunal will be thoroughly impartial and that it will be appointed in good time. May I expect another letter from you in due course?

N. A. I.: Home, Political (A): January 1919: Nos. 3-16

368. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

NADIAD,
Ashadh Krishna 4 [July 27, 1918]

DEAR JAMNALALJI,

Your love makes me feel ashamed. I wish—I ask of God—that I may deserve all that love. I hope that your devotion will ever lead you forward on the path of virtue.

For success in the task of spreading education in Marwar a good organizer is needed.

The work of recruitment is going on very slowly. So far the number may be about 150. No one has yet been sent. I am trying to raise a battalion of Gujaratis.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand: G. N. 2841

369. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I must indulge myself again. I begin to perceive a deep meaning behind the Japanese reluctance to listen to the message of a Prophet from a defeated nation.[1] War will be always with us. There seems to be no possibility of the whole human nature becoming transformed. *Moksha* and ahimsa [are] for individuals to attain. Full practice of ahimsa is inconsistent with possession of wealth, land or rearing of children. There is real ahimsa in defending my wife and children even at the risk of striking down the wrongdoer. It is perfect ahimsa not to strike him but intervene to receive his blows. India did neither on the field of Plassey.[2] We were a cowardly mob warring against one another, hungering for

[1] The reference is to Rabindranath Tagore whose speech in Tokyo against Japan's imitating the West was greeted with unbecoming derision.

[2] In 1757 at the battle of Plassey, British forces under Clive gained a decisive victory over the much larger forces of Siraj-ud-Daula because of the treachery of his own chieftain, Mir Ja'far, who had conspired with the British.

the Company's[1] silver and selling our souls for a mess of pottage. And so have we remained more or less—more rather then less—up to today. There was no ahimsa in their miserable performance, notwithstanding examples of personal bravery and later corrections of the exaggerated accounts of those days. Yes the Japanese reluctance was right. I do not know sufficiently what the fathers of old did. They suffered, I expect, not out of their weakness, but out of their strength. The *rishis* of old stipulated that their religious practices were to be protected by the Kshatriyas. Rama protected Vishwamitra from the *rakshasas* disturbing his meditations. He could later on dispense with this protection. I find great difficulties in recruiting but do you know that not one man has yet objected because he would not kill. They object because they fear to die. This unnatural fear of death is ruining the nation. For the moment, I am simply thinking of the Hindus. Total disregard of death in a Mahomedan lad is a wonderful possession.

I have not written a coherent letter today but I have given you indications of my mental struggle.

Do you know that Sorabji is dead. He died in Johannesburg. A life full of promise has come to an abrupt end. The ways of God are inscrutable.

With deep love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

370. LETTER TO MILLIE GRAHAM POLAK

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

MY DEAR MILLIE,

Sorabji is no more. A cable has just arrived from Johannesburg giving the sad news. There is nothing striking about this death. Many like Sorabji have died before now. But Sorabji has played such an important part in our lives that his sudden death comes like a rude shock. It is only one's faith in the indestructibility of energy and continuity of effort that reconciles one to activity in life. An event is a shock when we do not understand its

[1] East India Company

purpose and its seasonableness. But in God's plan, I suppose, there is nothing unseasonable and nothing purposeless.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

371. LETTER TO S. K. RUDRA

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

DEAR MR. RUDRA,

I thank you for letting me share your happiness.[1] Sudhir is a brick. Yes he is doing good work, and so are the other boys each in his own line. It is a result of orderly training.

While you approve of my recruiting campaign, Charlie is fighting it out with me. He thinks it is just likely that I am deluding myself. He thinks that this activity of mine may injure my service to the cause of ahimsa. I have taken it up to serve that very cause. I know that my responsibility is great. It was equally great when I was supine, feeling that recruiting was not my line. There was a danger of those who put faith in my word becoming or remaining utterly unmanly, falsely believing that it was ahimsa. We must have the ability in the fullest measure to strike and then perceive the inability of brute force and renounce the power. Jesus had the power to consume his enemies to ashes but he refrained and permitted himself to be killed for he so loved, etc.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] His son had been appointed Second Lieutenant and his son-in-law had secured a first class in Natural Science tripos.

372. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 191[8]

DEAR MR. SHASTRIAR,

Thakor has just arrived. He tells me you were again dowr with illness. You need a cruel doctor who would mercilessly orde[r] a complete fast and water treatment. But you can expect nothin[g] but licensed murders from that most empirical of professions. When-ever I hear of your illness, I feel like shooting some doctor or othe[r] but my ahimsa comes in the way. Happily for you and India [I] have no parliamentary ambition. Otherwise I should introduce [a] Bill disqualifying people getting continuously ill from membership

Here is a cable[1] from Polak. I cannot understand its ful[l] significance. But I suppose there is no danger of the scheme[2] be-ing rejected by the country.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desa[i]

373. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

[NADIAD,
July 29, 191[8]

In the summer, living in a village appears grand indeed, but i[t] is doubtful whether one would enjoy it in the monsoon. Personally I think it would be very difficult for me to go to any place like during the rainy season. My dislike of dirt is increasing, nc diminishing. I feel suffocated if the lavatory is the least bit un-clean. Here, I go to an open space to answer the call of nature carrying a hoe with me. I dig up before passing stools and, whe[n] I have finished, I leave the place after covering it with plenty c[f] earth. I have realized that, because of our failure to observe thi[s] rule, innumerable diseases are spread, millions of flies bred. Thos[e] who are not particularly sensitive to lack of cleanliness are, I finc happy enough in a village. Last evening, two *bhajan*[3] parties cam[e] to see me. Their musical instruments must be worth some 5 c

[1] This is not available.

[2] The reference presumably is to the Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme.

[3] Devotional Song

10 rupees. These included drums, cymbals, *kartals*[1] and one single-stringed *tamboor*[2]. With these, they produced music which was all sweetness. All the songs were about Shri Krishna, how he provided Draupadi with an unending sari, ate the dish of greens with Vidur, humbled Duryodhana's pride and so on. All this is put in a language so sweet that it cannot but spread round the spirit of love and devotion. Why all this devotion to Krishna? As far as I can see, it must be because of his heroism and his unfailing solicitude for others. It is because he, with his infinite strength, helped the little Pandava kingdom to victory, destroyed the wicked Kauravas and freed the people from suffering, that he came to be sung of in songs and gained a place among the immortals. He cared nothing for the favour of one so mighty as Duryodhana. He was not tempted by his wealth, but relished Sudama's rice with gusto, such was his simplicity. It is a miracle the poet has wrought in the story of Krishna. There is no doubt that a man of such wisdom did exist. I wish you could read the whole *Mahabharata* in Sanskrit. You will then get a joy that I have missed. My subject was the grandeur of village life but I strayed into the story of Krishna. It was last night's music which made me think of it. I found that music even better than ours. It was natural and sweet. It was not very loud. The drum and the other instruments played low. The moon was full. We all sat under a tree. Everyone was in country clothes. The people spread out carpets and sat on them. They were all farmers. After having laboured all day, they were having innocent pleasure, drinking draughts of sweetness from the music of God's name. I said to one of them : "Friend, you are enjoying yourselves thoroughly." He replied: "Well, what else should we do? We prefer to pass our time in *bhajans* and *kirtans* rather than just gossip." These people, being *Baraiya* by caste, would ordinarily be looked upon as uncivilized, but they were not so in the least. They may be called uneducated but, in truth, they were nothing of the sort. I felt that, if the educated classes drew these people closer to themselves and poured new zest into them, one could put them to any task one chose. Their wisdom is boundless. One should only know how to utilize it. We are like the bad carpenter who finds fault with his tools. Well, I have written quite a long letter to you. Pass it on to Manilal after reading it. I do not know when I shall write another like this again.

[1] & [2] Indian musical instruments

It is morning time, I have some leisure and my brain is brimful of ideas; I have emptied it a little before you. If you, too, can taste from this a measure of the happiness which was mine, I would have, in a real sense, given you a portion of your inheritance. We claim our share from the Government; on the same principle, if I share with you what I possess, I shall be free of my debt.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

374. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

BELOVED KASTUR,

I know you are pining to stay with me. I feel, though, that we must go on with our tasks. At present, it is right that you remain where you are. If you but look upon all the children there as your own, quite soon you will cease to feel the absence of the latter. This is the least one can do as one gets older. As you come to love others and serve them, you will have a joy welling up from within. You should make it a point to visit early in the morning all those who may be sick, and nurse them. Special food should be prepared or kept apart for anyone who needs such food. You should visit the Maharashtrian ladies, amuse their children or take them out for a walk. You should make them feel that they are no strangers. Their health should improve.

You should converse with Nirmala on useful subjects, that is, on religious matters and the like. You may ask her to read out the *Bhagavat* to you. She will even find the thing interesting. If you thus keep yourself busy in the service of others, believe me the mind will always be full of joy. And you must not omit to look after Punjabhai's meals and other requirements.

MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

375. LETTER TO KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

DEAR KISHORELAL,

This letter is meant for you and Shri Narahari. To the extent that Shri Narayanarao's charge that distinctions are made between Maharashtrians and Gujaratis is justified, it is our duty to try to remove the causes. Here is a field for the exercise of non-violence. The first step to take is for you all to come together and examine how much of truth there is in the charge. The Gujarati ladies should try to mix freely with the Maharashtrian ladies. The most important thing is to see that the children make no such distinction. It is not necessary to give exaggerated importance to what I have said; just reflect over it for a moment and do all that may need to be done.

As for prayers, I place this before you for consideration. We should not take the plea of inability so far that, in the end, we find ourselves incapable of doing anything at all. We should do the teaching as well as we can and overcome our shortcomings by gradual effort. Do you think I would use the plea of inability if I was myself required to teach Sanskrit? I know that my Sanskrit is no Sanskrit. But I would certainly teach it if no other person was available and I would get over my deficiency day by day. It was in this way that Parnell topped them all in his knowledge of the rules of business in the House of Commons. You always think of your weakness and are afraid of doing anything. Would you not be happier if, using all your strength, you disposed of every task that fell to you?

In what manner should the children learn to use their strength? It is a difficult thing to teach them to defend themselves and yet not be overbearing. Till now, we used to teach them not to fight back if anyone beat them. Can we go on doing so now? What will be the effect of such teaching on a child? Will he, in his youth, be a forgiving or a timid man? My powers of thinking fail me. Use yours. This new aspect of non-violence which has revealed itself to me has enmeshed me in no end of problems. I have not found one master-key for all the riddles, but it must be found. Shall we teach our boys to return two blows for one, or tolerate a blow from anyone weaker than themselves but to

fight back, should a stronger one attack them, and take the beating that might follow? What should one do if assaulted by a Government official? Should the boy submit to the beating at the moment and then come to us for advice, or should he do what might seem best in the circumstances and take the consequences? These are the problems which face us if we give up the royal road of turning the other cheek. Is the first course the right one because easier to take? Or is it that we shall come upon the right path only by treading through a dangerous one? The foot-tracks which go up the Himalayas lead in all directions, sometimes even away from the destination and yet an experienced guide will take us in the end to the summit. One cannot climb the Himalayas in a straight line. Can it be that, in like fashion, the path of non-violence, too, is difficult? May God protect us, may He indeed.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

376. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI SHAH

[NADIAD,]
July 29, 1918

DEAR PUNJABHAI,

Your decision is good.[1] All activity inspired by concern for *paramartha*[2] is in fact withdrawal from activity and ensures *moksha*. *Paramartha* lies in serving others. It requires a supreme effort to withdraw interest from oneself and direct it to others. One should have nothing but pleasure in doing one's best for others in the Ashram. Someone or other is ill there all the time. One should go visiting them during the day or keep the children amused by playing with them. Activity such as this brings no pain and leads to no bickerings. This is the only way to knowledge of the Self. You will realize this soon enough. Make it a daily practice to be for a while with the ailing ones like Bhuvarji and others.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

[1] During Maganlal Gandhi's absence, who was at Allahabad, Punjabhai took his place in the Ashram.
[2] *Summum bonum*

377. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 31, 1918

BELOVED KASTUR,

Your being unhappy makes me unhappy. If it had been possible to bring ladies, I would have brought you. Why should you lose your head because I may have to go out? We have learnt to find our happiness in separation. If God has so willed, we shall meet again and live together. There are many useful things one can do in the Ashram and you are bound to keep happy if you occupy yourself with them.

[From Gujarati]
Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. IV

378. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

[NADIAD,]
July 31,1918

CHI. MANILAL,

I have had no letter from you recently. Herewith a letter from Sam for you to read and ponder over. Whatever their fault, I am afraid you have been guilty of far too much anger and shown extreme malice. You were free to stand on your rights but should not have forgotten your manners. While insisting on order, you could have spared yourself the anger. None of them has put by any great sum of money, or appropriated any. What is Devi-behn's fault? It is too much that Mr. West and Mr. Sam have had to sacrifice their children's education. It seems to me that you have vented on them your anger with me. You do not even visit them. Surely, you should not behave thus. I think you should apologize to them. Do this, however, only if you think that that is the right course, and not because it will please me. Anything you do without giving up your freedom will seem best to me.

I think I have given you many reasons to be angry with me. Please forgive me for this. I have pushed you about a good deal and that has interrupted your regular education. You can, however,

forgive me only if you realize that this was inevitable. I have passed my whole life in pursuit of self-knowledge, in discovering where my duty lay. My work has been appreciated because I have acted as I believe. This has saved me from many a pitfall. But, looking at the matter superficially, your interests have suffered from a worldly point of view. Just as I have had to pay for my experiments, so have you and Ba. Ba has understood this and has therefore gained what no other woman has done. You have not understood this fully yet and, therefore, harbour anger. I would still say that the service I have rendered to you brothers, no other man in my place would have done. I got you to share in my experiences on the path of dharma. What more can anyone do? Like other parents, I could have allowed you to go the way of the world and shaped my life in my own way. If I had done so, there would have been no bond left between you and me by now and we would have been to each other what Gokibehn is to me, a sister only in name. I could not have acted otherwise than I have because, in my pursuit of truth, I would have been where I am and you would have wandered off the path. This would not have been for your good. If you think over this patiently, you will be able to get over your anger with me. Consider, there has been a rift between Harilal and me. His life follows a course all its own. A father and son are truly so when both follow a common mode of life, each supporting the other. I can take no interest in Harilal's life and he in mine. The fault is not his. The way he thinks is governed by his past actions. I am not angry with Harilal. But the chain which bound him and me together is broken and the sweetness which should inform the relations of father and son is no more. Such things happen often enough in the world. What is uncommon about me is that I could not draw Harilal after me in my search for dharma and so he kept away. He has, in sheer folly, lost his employer Rs. 30,000, has passed a disgraceful letter to him and is now without employment. As they know that he is my son, he is not in jail. You have stayed on in my life, but are discontented. You can't bring yourself to go out of it, and yet do not altogether like being in it. This is why you are not at peace with yourself. If you can somehow manage to be contented, you will also have peace. I have not harmed you intentionally. All I have done I did in the belief that it was for your good. Is not this enough to bring down your anger against me? What I have said will surely not make you more angry. I was only too happy that you told me what you think. All the management must be in your hands now.

You will see my second appeal in connection with recruitment for the war. I have offered the services of five persons from the Ashram. There are others also eager to go, but it is not possible to send them. The five who are to be sent are Ramanandan, Surendra, Thakorlal, Nanubhai and Raojibhai. I shall of course be there. I believe a depot will soon be started here. Had Devdas not been doing the work of Hindi, he too would have joined. He is eager to do so. I have written to Harilal, but he is not likely to go. You are doing important work there; I cannot therefore ask you. Ramdas remains. He can certainly join if he wishes. Ramdas does not feel happy if he has to leave one job and take another. You may ask him.

Nirmala is in the Ashram at present. She has come of her own choice. How long she will stay, one cannot say. She will most probably bring in Gokibehn also.

Khushalbhai has come to stay in the Ashram. Chhaganlal and he live separately. Chhaganlal has joined the national school.

The buildings are still under construction. The weaving shed is ready. It is used for living also. The library and other buildings are yet to be constructed.

I feel the loss of Sorabji very keenly. We have now to begin from the scratch, as it were.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original in Gandhiji's hand: C. W. 115. Courtesy: Sushilabehn Gandhi

379. *LETTER TO MOHANLAL KHANDERIA*

NADIAD,
Ashadh Vad 8 [July 31, 1918][1]

DEAR SHRI MOHANLAL,

I have your letter concerning Kheda district. I have not received the money yet. I will use it for some work I have to do in connection with the war.

I should like you to do something to perpetuate Bhai Sorabji's memory. It will be difficult to get a worker like him. I think it will be best to institute a scholarship and send people to England.

[1] The mention of war effort makes it clear that the letter was written in 1918.

Umiyashankar tells me that you are doing well. I am glad.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: G. N. 6210

380. LETTER TO ADA WEST

[NADIAD,]
July 31, 1918

MY DEAR DEVI,

. . .[1] What a tragedy this death of Sorabji! I was feeling most comfortable about South Africa and hoping that now that Sorabji was there all would go well. My hopes have come to nothing . . .[2]

I do not know what you all think of my recruiting activity. I am working all the time at it. My argument is briefly this : India has lost the power to strike. She must learn to strike before she can voluntarily renounce the power of striking. She may never renounce. Then she will be as bad as the West, or, better still, the modernists. Today she is neither. The ancients in India knew the art of warfare—the art of killing—and yet reduced the activity to a minimum and taught the world that it is better to refrain than to strike. Today I find that everybody is desirous of killing but most are afraid of doing so or powerless to do so. Whatever is to be the result I feel certain that the power must be restored to India. The result may be carnage. Then India must go through it. Today's condition is intolerable.

Yours,
BHAI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] & [2] Some words are omitted in the source.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CONGRESS-LEAGUE ADDRESS

[DELHI,
November 26, 1917]

SIRS,

We, the members of the All-India Committee of the Indian National Congress and of the Council of the All-India Moslem League, welcome you, Sir, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for India, and approach you and Your Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General, His Imperial Majesty's august representative and the head of his Government in this country, with feelings of gratitude and hope; gratitude, in that proposals of reform formulated by the National Congress and the Moslem League have received the attention of Your Excellency and of His Imperial Majesty's Ministers in Great Britain whom you, Sir, represent; hope, in that we feel that our proposals being just and in full harmony with British history and policy, will meet with favour at your hands.

Sirs, we cannot let this historic occasion pass without acknowledging the great and good work that Great Britain has accomplished in India. The protection of the land from invasion from without and the establishment of peace and order are in themselves no mean achievements; but it is a prouder title to glory that she has produced a new intellectual awakening a national consciousness and an eager longing for freedom among the heirs of ancient civilization who had unfortunately fallen from their high estate. It was a great truth which Lord Ripon of blessed memory felicitously uttered when he described educated Indians as the children of British Rule, and we can assure you, Sirs, that Sir Bartle Frere's observation is as correct today as when he made it that no section of the people of India appreciate the advantages of that rule more highly than those whose minds have been broadened by the liberal English education which will for all time stand as Britain's most imperishable monument in India. Their very political aspirations are a tribute to the success of her mission in the East. "The proudest day in the annals of England" which Lord Macaulay foresaw has come, and Indians today demand that Self-Government which Englishmen have always fervently believed to be the indispensable condition of self-respecting national life. The Indian National Congress, which a renowned Indian statesman described as "the greatest triumph of British administration and a crown of glory to the great British nation" is the highest expression of this sacred national aspiration, and the ideal of the Congress is also the ideal of the most important organization of Indian Musalmans, the All-India Moslem League. The authoritative announcement which was made simultaneously in

England and India on the 20th of August last that His Majesty's Government, with the complete accord of the Government of India, accept responsible government for India as an integral part of the Empire as the goal of British policy was therefore received by the country with no ordinary feeling of satisfaction. For that epoch-making declaration, Sirs, we Indians of all creeds, classes and communities are deeply beholden to His Majesty's Government as well as to the Government of India.

We submit however that to ensure the early realization of this ideal the reforms that are to be introduced as a first instalment should confer a substantial measure of power on the people acting through their chosen representatives in Councils, and further, that the determination of future progress should not, as has been proposed, be left entirely to the Government in India and England. It ought to be recognized that the people of India themselves, as the party principally affected, have a right to an effective voice in the decision of a question which is of such supreme moment to them. This would be in conformity with the principle of the declaration recently made by the Prime Minister of England "that the wishes of the inhabitants must be the supreme consideration in the resettlement", and that this formula "is to be applied equally in the tropical countries". It is our settled conviction that the best interests of this country and of the Empire demand that full responsible Government should be established here as early as practicable. We are therefore anxious to be assured that the progress towards the goal shall be reasonably rapid. We hope that this point will be taken into consideration by His Majesty's Government.

We are not less grateful for the decision to introduce a substantial first instalment of reforms at as early a date as may be practicable. We beg leave to observe, Sirs, that the proceedings of the annual sessions of both the Indian National Congress and All-India Moslem League are a living proof of the imperative need of liberal reforms in all directions—constitutional, financial and administrative. Amelioration of the material condition of the masses as well as the satisfaction of the political aspirations of the classes has throughout been the anxious concern of these organizations. They have persistently advocated reforms in land revenue policy and administration; measures for the relief of agricultural indebtedness, agricultural education and agricultural improvement; rapid progress in the construction of irrigation works; an active policy of industrial development and technical education; the wider diffusion of education in all its branches; retrenchment of public expenditure and reduction of taxation, pressing heavily on those least able to bear it; reform of the police, and of the system of administration of justice; temperance reform; lenient forest rules; the improvement of public health, and adequate provision of medical relief; the re-institution of village Panchayats;—all of which are designed and calculated to make life more worth living for the tens of millions of our poorer countrymen, with whose condition as it is no one can affect to be satisfied. We submit

with confidence that educated Indians cannot justly be blamed if the remedial measures for which they have been striving have not been introduced. It is true that they have been claiming with equal ardour the practical recognition of the rights which legitimately are theirs in their own country; but in doing so they have been actuated at least as much by the earnest desire to exercise them in the interest of their less favoured brethren as by the prompting of their own national self-respect. If they have insistently pleaded for some measure of real power for the representatives and spokesmen of the people in the government of the country, if they have declined to reconcile themselves to a position of subordination and inferiority in administration, if they have pressed for the removal of all disabilities and distinction based on racial and religious grounds, if they have expressed their dissatisfaction with the share assigned to them in the defence of the country, and if they have protested against reactionary and repressive measures, they have done so because the assertion of their rights as Indians is to them a compelling public duty. Neither the National Congress nor the Moslem League has ever been slow to acknowledge the value of the progressive measures that have been adopted by Government from time to time. And we may therefore be permitted to say with the less hesitation that the experience of years has convinced us that under the existing system social and economic reform has much less chance than the well-being and advancement of the people demands, that Indian public opinion is more powerless than effectual, service and sectional interests are not always subordinated to the common weal, and that the system should be so altered as to make the will of the people prevail as far as may be in all matters of internal administration.

Essential Features of Scheme

It is in this conviction, Sirs, that the National Congress and the Moslem League considered the constitutional and administrative reforms which they should respectfully urge on the Government here and in England for present adoption. The Joint Scheme of Reforms is the result of careful deliberation of joint conferences of their committees. It may be mentioned here that the Memorandum which was submitted to Your Excellency by nineteen elected members of Your Excellency's Legislative Council in the autumn of 1916 is in accord with the proposals of the Congress and the League. We now ask permission, Sirs, to dwell on what may be regarded as the essential features of the Scheme of Reforms. The basal principles on which it is founded are, firstly, that the British connection with India should be safeguarded, and secondly, that, subject to this fundamental reservation, the character and constitution of the Government of India and the Provincial Governments should be transformed so as to make them representative of and responsible to the people acting through their elected representatives in Councils. To the former end it is proposed that the Government of India should continue to own responsibility to His Majesty's Government, and through them to the British Parliament, in matters

pertaining to foreign relations and the defence of the country. The Legislature is to have no control over them. Nor will it have any right to interfere with the relations of the Government with the Indian States. This being secured, it is urged that in matters of internal administration the control of the Secretary of State should be replaced by control by the Legislature; the Government of India similarly devolving power on the provincial Governments, which in their turn will own responsibility to their respective Legislatures. It must obviously follow that there should be a strong Indian element in the Executive Governments as well as that the Legislative Councils should be expanded and reformed so as to consist of a substantial majority of members elected directly by the people on as wide a franchise as may be possible. And these Councils should be endowed with real and substantial power, not only over legislation but also over finance and administration. We venture to think that the Congress and the Moslem League make no extravagant proposals when they ask that one-half of the Executive Councillors should be Indians, and that four-fifths of the Legislative Councils should consist of elected members. Nor, we submit, are the powers proposed for the latter bodies excessive or impracticable. Adequate safeguards have been provided in the Scheme to prevent the adoption of hasty or unsuitable measures—legislative, financial or administrative; as well as to protect the interests of minorities. In connection with the latter point we beg to invite attention to the provision that no non-official proposal affecting communal interests to which three-fourths of the members belonging to that community object, should be proceeded with in any Legislative Council.

The reforms relating to the Secretary of State and his Council are suggested as being consequential on the reform of the system of government in the country itself. They will, it is trusted, be found to make for economy and for harmony between the authorities in the two countries, without in any way impairing efficiency.

In the Memorandum in support of the proposals, which we beg to hand with this address, the case for reform is set forth at some length. It discusses, too, the important cognate subject of local self-government and a few urgently needed administrative reforms for the introduction of which both the Congress and the League have long been earnestly appealing to Government. The resolutions of the Congress and the Moslem League, the Joint Scheme of Reforms, and the memorandum of the nineteen members, are appended to our Memorandum to facilitate reference. We hope that the country will not have to wait longer to see Lord Ripon's cherished scheme of real local self-government fully carried out; or for the substantial Indianization of the public services for which our late revered countryman, Mr. Dadabhoy Naoroji, laboured so long and so hard; or for the complete separation of the judicial services and functions from the executive, a reform needed even more in the interest of the backward masses than of the classes; or for such an amendment of the Arms Act and Rules as will not only do away with the invidious racial discrimination against Indians

but empower them to possess and carry arms on conditions similar to those which prevail in other civilized countries, in most of the States in this very country, and in the case of Europeans and Americans in British India itself. The country has expressed its gratification at the removal of the bar against the appointment of Indians as commissioned officers in the Army. It trusts that the rules which will regulate their admission will be liberal and open an honourable and patriotic career to the young men of all classes who may satisfy such tests as may be imposed to judge their fitness, that the requisite facilities for their training and examination will be provided in India itself, and that Indians will be appointed in reasonably large numbers. It is a grievance of long standing that Indians are not permitted to enlist as volunteers. If, however, the system of volunteering as it has existed is to disappear, it is believed that the Indian Defence Force will not be disbanded after the war, and it is urged that the Indian section of it may be placed on a level of absolute equality with the European.

INDIA'S STATUS IN THE EMPIRE

Before taking leave of you, Sirs, we would invite attention to the very important subject of India's status in the Empire. Our claim in one word is that she should be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of equality with the Dominions. The relation of the two should be mutual in the complete sense of the term. We submit that if the Dominions are to exercise any rights in relation to India, the latter should have the power to exercise the same rights in relation to them. In any Council or Parliament of the Empire which may be constituted at a future date, India should be represented in like manner and in an equal measure with the Dominions. Unless this is done, the participation of the Dominions in the governance of our country, without a corresponding right in us to participate in the governance of them, will mean a lowering of even our present unsatisfactory status, which will arouse the strongest opposition in this country. We hope and trust that His Majesty's Government will never entertain any such proposal. In the meantime we request that India may be allowed to be represented in the Imperial Conference (and in the Imperial Cabinet if any such should be constituted) through persons elected by the elected members of our Legislative Councils. We are beholden to His Majesty's Government and the Government of India for the privilege accorded to India in the beginning of this year, of sending three gentlemen to represent her in the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet. Nor are we less sensible of the value of the unanimous resolution recorded by the former body in favour of the regular representation of India at future ordinary sittings of the Imperial Conference. The constitutional position of the Government of India being what it is in relation to His Majesty's Government on the one side and the people of India on the other, its nominees cannot have the character of representatives or spokesmen of the

people, as have the Ministers of the Dominions, which are endowed with responsible government. In this view of the matter we are constrained to submit that during the period of transition from the existing system to responsible government, the representatives of this country in the Imperial Conference and the Imperial Cabinet should be allowed to be elected by the elected members of the Legislative Councils in India.

The Leader, 28-11-1917

APPENDIX II

THE CONGRESS-LEAGUE SCHEME

(a) That having regard to the fact that the great communities of India are the inheritors of ancient civilizations and have shown great capacity for government and administration, and to the progress in education and public spirit made by them during a century of British Rule, and further having regard to the fact that the present system of Government does not satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people and has become unsuited to existing conditions and requirements, the Congress is of opinion that the time has come when His Majesty the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a Proclamation announcing that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer Self-Government on India at an early date.

(b) That in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted towards Self-Government by granting the Reforms contained in the scheme prepared by the All-India Congress Committee in concert with the Reform Committee appointed by the All-India Muslim League (detailed below).

(c) That in the reconstruction of the Empire, India shall be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the Self-Governing Dominions.

REFORM SCHEME

I–Provincial Legislative Councils

1. Provincial Legislative Councils shall consist of four-fifths elected and of one-fifth nominated members.

2. Their strength shall be not less than 125 members in the major Provinces, and from 50 to 75 in the minor Provinces.

3. The members of Councils should be elected directly by the people on as broad a franchise as possible.

4. Adequate provision should be made for the representation of important minorities by election, and the Muslims should be represented through special electorates on the Provincial Legislative Councils in the following proportions:

Punjab—One-half of the elected Indian Members.
United Provinces—30 p.c. „ „
Bengal—40 p.c. „ „
Bihar—25 p.c. „ „
Central Provinces—15 p.c. „ „
Madras—15 p.c. „ „
Bombay—One-third „ „

Provided that no Muslim shall participate in any of the other elections to the Imperial or Provincial Legislative Councils, save and except those by electorates representing special interests.

Provided further that no bill, nor any clause thereof, nor a resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community, which question is to be determined by the members of that community in the Legislative Council concerned, shall be proceeded with, if three-fourths of the members of that community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial, oppose the bill or any clause thereof or the resolution.

5. The head of the Provincial Government should not be the President of the Legislative Council but the Council should have the right of electing its President.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions should not be restricted to the member putting the original question, but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7 (a) Except customs, post, telegraph, mint, salt, opium, railways, army and navy, and tributes from Indian States, all other sources of revenue should be Provincial.

(b) There should be no divided heads of revenue. The Government of India should be provided with fixed contributions from the Provincial Governments, such fixed contributions being liable to revision when extraordinary and unforeseen contingencies render such revision necessary.

(c) The Provincial Council should have full authority to deal with all matters affecting the internal administration of the Province, including the power to raise loans, to impose and alter taxation and to vote on the Budget. All items of expenditure, and all proposals concerning ways and means for raising the necessary revenue should be embodied in Bills and submitted to the Provincial Council for adoption.

(d) Resolution on all matters within the purview of the Provincial Government should be allowed for discussion in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself.

(e) A resolution passed by the Provincial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Executive Government, unless vetoed by the Governor-in-Council, provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

(f) A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussio of a definite matter of urgent public importance, if supported by not less tha one-eighth of the members present.

8. A special meeting of the Provincial Council may be summoned on requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

9. A Bill, other than a Money Bill may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consen of the Government should not be required therefor.

10. All Bills passed by Provincial Legislatures shall have to receive the assent of the Governor before they become law, but may be vetoed by th Governor-General.

11. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

II–Provincial Governments

1. The head of every Provincial Government shall be a Governor who shal not ordinarily belong to the Indian Civil Service or any of the permanent services.

2. There shall be in every Province an Executive Council which, with th Governor, shall constitute the Executive Government of the Province.

3. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointe to the Executive Councils.

4. Not less than one-half of the members of the Executive Council shal consist of Indians to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Council.

5. The term of office of the members shall be five years.

III–Imperial Legislative Council

1. The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be 150.

2. Four-fifths of the members shall be elected.

3. The franchise for the Imperial Legislative Council should be widened as far as possible on the lines of the electorates for Muslims for the Provincial Legislative Councils, and the elected members of the Provincial Legislative Councils should also form an electorate for the return of members of the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. One-third of the Indian elected members should be Muslims elected by separate Muslim electorates in the several Provinces, in the proportion, as nearly as may be, in which they are represented on the Provincial Legislative Councils by separate Muslim electorates. *Vide* provisos to section 1, clause 4.

5. The President of the Council shall be elected by the Council itself.

6. The right of asking supplementary questions shall not be restricted to the member putting the original question but should be allowed to be exercised by any other member.

7. A special meeting of the Council may be summoned on a requisition by not less than one-eighth of the members.

8. A Bill, other than a Money Bill, may be introduced in Council in accordance with rules made in that behalf by the Council itself, and the consent of the Executive Government should not be required therefor.

9. All Bills passed by the Council shall have to receive the assent of the Governor-General before they become law.

10. All financial proposals relating to sources of income and items of expenditure shall be embodied in Bills. Every such Bill and the Budgets as a whole shall be submitted for the vote of the Imperial Legislative Council.

11. The term of office of members shall be five years.

12. The matters mentioned herein below shall be exclusively under the control of the Imperial Legislative Council.

(a) Matters in regard to which uniform legislation for the whole of India is desirable.

(b) Provincial legislation in so far as it may affect inter-Provincial fiscal relations.

(c) Questions affecting purely Imperial Revenue, excepting tributes from Indian States.

(d) Questions affecting purely Imperial expenditure, except that no resolution of the Imperial Legislative Council shall be binding on the Governor-General-in-Council in respect of military charges for the defence of the country.

(e) The right of revising Indian tariffs and customs duties, of imposing, altering, or removing any tax or cess, modifying the existing system of currency and banking, and granting any aids or bounties to any or all deserving and nascent industries of the country.

(f) Resolutions on all matters relating to the administration of the country as a whole.

13. A resolution passed by the Legislative Council should be binding on the Executive Government unless vetoed by the Governor-General-in-Council; provided however that if the resolution is again passed by the Council after an interval of not less than one year, it must be given effect to.

14. A motion for adjournment may be brought forward for the discussion of a definite matter of urgent public importance if supported by not less than one-eighth of the members present.

15. When the Crown chooses to exercise its power of veto in regard to a Bill passed by the Provincial Legislative Council, or by the Imperial Legislative Council, it should be exercised within twelve months from the date on which it is passed, and the Bill shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the fact of such veto is made known to the Legislative Council concerned.

16. The Imperial Legislative Council shall have no power to interfere with he Government of India's direction of the military affairs and the foreign and

political relations of India, including the declaration of war, the making of peac and the entering into treaties.

IV–The Government of India

1. The Governor-General of India will be the head of the Government o India.

2. He will have an Executive Council, half of whom shall be Indians.

3. The Indian members should be elected by the elected members of th Imperial Legislative Council.

4. Members of the Indian Civil Service shall not ordinarily be appointe to the Executive Council of the Governor-General.

5. The power of making all appointments in the Imperial Civil Services shal vest in the Government of India, as constituted under this scheme, due re gard being paid to existing interests subject to any laws that may be made by th Imperial Legislative Council.

6. The Government of India shall not ordinarily interfere in the loca affairs of a Province, and powers not specifically given to a Provincial Govern ment shall be deemed to be vested in the former. The authority of the Gov ernment of India will ordinarily be limited to general supervision and superin tendence over the Provincial Governments.

7. In legislative and administrative matters the Government of India as constituted under this scheme, shall, as far as possible, be independent c the Secretary of State.

8. A system of independent audit of the accounts of the Government c India should be instituted.

V–The Secretary of State in Council

1. The Council of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished.

2. The salary of the Secretary of State should be placed on the Britis Estimates.

3. The Secretary of State should, as far as possible, occupy the same positio in relation to the Government of India, as the Secretary of State for the Colo nies does in relation to the Governments of the Self-Governing Dominions.

4. The Secretary of State for India should be assisted by two Permanen Under-Secretaries, one of whom should always be an Indian.

VI–India and the Empire

1. In any Council or other body which may be constituted or convene for the settlement or control of Imperial affairs, India shall be adequately re presented in like manner with the Dominions and with equal rights.

2. Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of statu and rights of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King through out the Empire.

VII–MILITARY AND OTHER MATTERS

1. The military and naval services of His Majesty, both in their commissioned and non-commissioned ranks, should be thrown open to Indians and adequate provision should be made for their selection, training and instruction in India.

2. Indians should be allowed to enlist as volunteers.

3. Executive Officers in India shall have no judicial powers entrusted to them, and the judiciary in every Province shall be placed under the highest Court of that Province.

The History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I

APPENDIX III

EXTRACT FROM J. T. WHITTY'S LETTER TO L. F. MORSHEAD

[BETTIAH,
November 17, 1917]

. . . It is a fact that very exaggerated ideas as regards Mr. Gandhi's position are held by the *raiyats*, but I hear it on good authority that in cases where he has given directions of which the *raiyats* disapprove they have refused to obey him. I am told for instance that in the Turkaulia *Dehat* when Mr. Gandhi advised the *raiyats* that they should pay *Sharahbeshi* less the 20 per cent agreed on, they said definitely that they would do no such thing and are now saying "Who is Gandhi?"

Two days ago Mr. Gandhi wrote[1] to me to say that he had a number of enquiries from the *raiyats* as to why enhancement suits in villages where *Tawan* had been taken were still going on although no enhancement was to be taken for seven years. It struck me that the enquiry showed an extraordinary lack of knowledge of the law on the subject and the position generally. Obviously we are not going to withdraw our cases as we merely intend to remit the enhancement for seven years but must have it recorded as legal rent and in any case we have as yet no reliable information as to the *raiyats* who have actually paid *Tawan*.

I replied to Mr. Gandhi that he was under a misapprehension which I should be glad to explain to him if he would call on me but that at the same time I wished to point out that the *raiyats* had not been to me and that I did not approve of having an intermediary in matters which I can deal with myself.

His reply was to the effect that he could not understand Government Officers refusing the assistance of public men who are in closer touch with the

[1] The correspondence referred to in this letter is not available.

raiyats than they could hope to be when both were working with the same ob- ject. He said he did not wish to come and see me on sufferance.

I replied that the matter in which he had intervened between me and my tenants was one of no difficulty whatever, [one] on which I required no assistance from any outsiders and that I objected to the introduction of an intermediary which prevented me from being in direct touch with my own tenants.

Mr. Gandhi refused to admit that his intervention was not justified, but expressed his wish to see me as regards his education policy.

I saw him and had a long talk with him and discussed the various points raised in the Commission's report.

As always in conversation I found him generally very reasonable. He expressed regret at the sudden breaking up of indigo cultivation. His own view was that some time might have been given. He told me that the refusal to pay rent is due to the stupidity of the *raiyats* who misinterpreted the orders passed. Whenever they came to him he explained to them that they must pay rent as usual. His own wish he says now is to utilize his position and any gratitude which he has earned from the *raiyats* to introduce sanitary ideas and improve agricultural methods. He wishes to improve the relations of planters and their tenants as far as it is in his power to do so.

He approved of the action of his lieutenant in going out to enquire into the alleged disturbance in Ammon's *dehat,* in which the police were said to be implicated, and this being so he would no doubt be prepared to make similar enquiries if asked to do so by the *raiyats*.

I still consider that Mr. Gandhi himself is disinterested in his ultimate motives, but in order to strengthen and secure his position he has to make use of methods and instruments which are sure to become a danger to the peace of the district.

As regards the non-payment of rent and the interference with landlords' admitted rights, he would certainly be on the side of the law and would advise the *raiyats* accordingly. To this extent at the present time his presence in the district is likely to do good rather than harm. At the same time he must be a continued centre of agitation. He has not been accepted as an arbitrator who will be fair to the interests of all parties, but as a champion of the *raiyats* against the Planters and it will be impossible for him to avoid being a storm-centre.

Yours sincerely
J. T. WHITTY

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

APPENDIX IV

EXTRACTS FROM OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND NOTES

(*a*) LETTER FROM J. L. MERRIMAN

MOTIHARI,
November 18, 1917

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I have to acknowledge your letter of 14-11-1917 instt.

I am interested to hear of your attempt to found schools. I shall be glad to hear more about this, regarding the class of schools you propose to open, and the type of education to be imparted. Also the places where you open them.

With regard to your letter of 17th instant about the matter of certain ryots' complaints that they had been compelled to sign certain documents. . . they are at liberty to go to the court if they think they have been victimized.

I am quite unable to listen to any observations in a case which is before the courts, which might tend to prejudice the merit of the court . . . I am glad therefore that you do not intend to impart your observations to me regarding a case brought by Sheoratan Nonia.

J. L. MERRIMAN

(*b*) J. L. MERRIMAN'S LETTER TO L. F. MORSHEAD

MOTIHARI,
November 24, 1917

DEAR MR. MORSHEAD,

My fortnightly confidential report.

The general situation gets no easier, rather the reverse. I regret to report that the recent Government vernacular notice appears to have tended to increase its difficulty. . . .

8. . . . there appears to be a recrudescence of excitement coinciding with Mr. Gandhi's return and the announcement of the Government's resolution.

9. Mr. Gandhi is again with us, though he has just written to inform me that he is going away for a fortnight. I informed you of the interview I had with him on 9th November 1917. He has been very active since his arrival early in the month. He has started founding schools at the following places:

(1) Barharwa-ne-Dhaka—in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Gokhalay, the latter being a "trained nurse and midwife",

(2) Mitiharwa—in charge of Mr. Soman, "a public worker from Belgaum", Mr. Balkrishna, "a young man from Gujarat" and Mrs. Gandhi herself.

(3) Belwa, P. S. Shikarpur, near Belwa Factory.

I solicit instructions as to the attitude to be adopted to Mr. Gandhi and his schools and hygienic propaganda. Am I to encourage him in his work before satisfying myself of its character, or am I to adopt a neutral attitude.

I am not prepared as yet to make any comments either on the nature of the instruction given by him or on the character of his followers. I know nothing about them. Personally I think that if they are genuinely interested in the matter they profess, they will soon get sick of trying to teach hygiene to the Bihari cultivator. Mr. Gandhi has been trying to get subscriptions for his schools, but has been met with a very modified enthusiasm from local Indians in this respect.

10. Similarly I would like instructions as to my attitude with regard to Mr. Gandhi's other activities. He is not confining himself to hygienic and educational matters only. He has been making personal enquiries at Belwa (the place at which he has also founded a school) concerning the recent case brought by Sheoratan Nonia *v.* Mr. Ammon of Belwa Factory, in connection with which I reported the conduct of Babu Janakdhari Prasad in my official letter of the 27th October last. Mr. Gandhi has offered to make "observations" on the case to me after it has been judicially decided. He has also been enquiring into the question of some agreements executed by the *raiyats* of the Seeraha Factory. I learn from Mr. Ammon that at Belwa Mr. Gandhi held a kind of formal enquiry, and took the depositions of complainant and some witnesses.

As a public officer, I presume, I should welcome friendly assistance from outside. At the same time the practice of independent enquiries into cases actually pending before the courts appears to me to be open to grave abuses, especially when the people concerned are, as in Champaran, ignorant, ill-balanced and prone to untruthfulness. Mr. Gandhi himself, quite possibly with justice, claims to be wholly impartial, but the impartiality of many of his assistants is open to suspicion, and I consider them to be not above "doctoring" a case to suit themselves. Mr. Gandhi has, I believe, previously given assurance that he would only interfere in cases where he believed the *raiyats* had been clearly victimized. But I submit that Mr. Gandhi's judgment is fallible. It appears to be quite impossible to make such distinction between cases. The practice must be countenanced in all cases or in none. I ask for guidance on this point.

With regard to the importation of "volunteers" from Belgaum, Gujarat and Bombay reported in para 9, I should also like to be informed of the attitude of Government. Mr. McPherson in a D. O. letter no. 2577C-1571/II of 1917, dated 20th July, 1917, to Heycock, instructed Heycock to inform Mr. Gandhi that he (Heycock) was "not aware of the attitude Government

will adopt towards the importation of "volunteers". May I now enquire if Government will communicate to me their attitude? . . .

Yours sincerely,
J. L. Merriman

(c) Extract from L. F. Morshead's Letter to H. McPherson

November 27, 1917

There are three factors just now tending to upset *raiyats* in the Division, namely, Home Rule propaganda, Gandhi's activities, and the tension between Hindus and Mahomedans. These react upon each other to upset the *raiyats'* minds and promote a disregard of law and authority. As already reported, village to village Home Rule meetings are being held in Saran, and are said to have encouraged the incident at Sipahiya; and, in combination with Gandhi's influence, to be stirring up trouble with the Maniara concern in Gopalganj.

Merriman's letter will show that the refusal to pay rent is becoming serious in Champaran, and that labour troubles are not settled. He asks for instructions as to his attitude towards Gandhi, especially in regard to his educational schemes and his importation of volunteers. I have not, however, had time to consider his letter properly.

(d) Extract from Note by W. Maude

November 27, 1917

I understand Sir William Vincent is coming here in a day or two and I think it might clear the air if H. H. and the two H.Ms. could see him together and point out the state of affairs in the District and ask how far the Government of India is prepared to go. The only effective action that I can see is to get Mr. Gandhi to promise to leave the District absolutely alone for six months or a year at least. If he really does that there is some chance of things settling down. As long as his name and personality keep bobbing up there is no chance of things settling. If we appeal to Mr. Gandhi to give the District a chance and he refuses or does not do so, how far will the Government of India back us up if we have to resort to compulsion? Sir W. Vincent will not of course be able to give us any absolute pledge, but he may be able to give us a glimpse into the mind of the Government of India which we do not possess.

(e) Sir E. A. Gait's Note to Chief Secretary

November 28, 1917

CHIEF SECRETARY,

Mr. Reid told me yesterday he had heard from Messrs Norman and Hill that all is quiet in their *dehats* and that Mr. Gandhi has helped to bring refractory *raiyats* to reason. He says, however, that considerable unrest is now spreading into Muzaffarpur, owing, it is stated, to the distribution there of the leaflets issued in Muzaffarpur district stating that these leaflets have no reference to that district and concern Champaran only.

The Maharani of Hathwa also told me this morning that there is a tendency in Saran for the *raiyats* to withhold their rents because of the unrest caused by Mr. Gandhi and the Home Rule propaganda. It is worth considering whether it would not be well to issue proclamation to the *raiyats* enjoining the payment of their lawful rents, and pointing out that they will themselves be the sufferers if they withhold payment.

E. A. Gait

(f) Extract from Note by E. C. Reyland

December 2, 1917

In considering the situation in Champaran we have also to consider the disquieting reports received from other districts north of the river, particularly those from Chapra. There can be no doubt that a wave of unrest has passed through the districts of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Saran. This wave undoubtedly started with Mr. Gandhi's advent. That there was discontent in Champaran there can be no question but with Mr. Gandhi's advent the attitude of the *raiyats* underwent a change for the worse. Rumours of what Mr. Gandhi was going to do spread throughout the districts named and we know it for a fact that *raiyats* from all districts went to Mr. Gandhi with their grievances. At the time not much attention appears to have been paid to the complaints from other districts but the general impression amongst the *raiyats* of other districts seems to be that, Mr. Gandhi, when he has done with Champaran, will take up the cause in other districts; in fact our latest information is that, speaking at recent meeting at Muzaffarpur, he promised that later on the tenants of that district would also enjoy the benefits that he, by his efforts, had secured for Champaran. In these circumstances it is not surprising that the simple folk should in Mr. Gandhi recognize someone all powerful. Whatever Mr. Gandhi's intentions may be, and I am willing to believe they are well meant, the fact remains that he is accompanied by a number of undesirables who are making use of his name to stir up trouble. If Mr. Gandhi's speeches have been correctly reported, they are calculated to encourage disaffection. Such

statements as he wished to see tenants partners with the planters and not slaves, that "the interests of the Hindus lay in trying to stop the wholesale slaughter of cows" appear curious statements for this gentleman to make at the present time, if, as he professes, he is trying to allay unrest. His action in making enquiries into cases that are *sub judice* almost amounts to contempt of court and certainly lowers the prestige of the local officials. I have no hesitation in saying Mr. Gandhi's presence is undesirable at the present time.

(g) Extract from H. McPherson's Letter to Secretary, Home Department

December 6, 1917

Mr. Gandhi's continued presence in Champaran is a difficult factor in the situation. His objects are doubtless sincere, and he is said to be striving for peace and to have worked with success in certain cases to attain this end in co-operation with the more responsible planters. His politics, however, are not within the comprehension of the ordinary cultivator, and the actions of the satellites, with whom he is surrounded, are not in all cases inspired with his own honesty of purpose. Mr. Gandhi is a prominent exponent of Home Rule, and the "monster" petition for which signatures are being collected throughout the mofussil was drafted by him.

There are other developments of Mr. Gandhi's work which, however well intentioned they may be, are liable to be misunderstood by the *raiyats*. His activities extend to the foundation of schools where instruction is imparted by educated teachers from Bombay and to the investigation by him and his followers of cases which are being inquired into by the police. Enough is not yet known of his schools and teachers to say what sort of ideas they are instilling into the minds of their pupils, but it is certain that his interference in criminal cases is a cause of embarrassment to the local police and magistracy.

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

APPENDIX V

LETTER FROM BABAN GOKHALAY

BARHARWA,
December 6, 1917

MY DEAR MR. GANDHI,

You would have arrived at Motihari by the time this reaches you and would like to know how the work here is progressing.

Since you were here last, we have been able to put almost all the wells in the village in order by removing the drains which being so close to the wells were polluting the drinking-water. In one or two cases, it was a difficult task as a drain from the house could not be diverted unless it passed through a neighbour's property which we managed to divert by appealing to the kindly feeling of the neighbours. In the other case, we had to take assistance of the elders of the village to use some persuasion. Anyhow we have achieved our object.

We are now after them for committing nuisance quite close to their houses. This we propose to effect through an elderly Mahomedan preaching against [it at] their usual Friday gathering. We propose to adopt a similar course for the Hindus. I think in the course of a few weeks we shall be able to see good results. In the meantime, we have managed to convince the people that there is no loss of prestige in at least covering the faeces with earth by doing it ourselves for them. You will be glad to know that people have now taken to it.

As for the schools, the number of students has gone up to over 75. The average daily attendance for the last month was over 60. The boys seem to take great delight in learning their songs and also the new outdoor games that are taught to them after their usual drill. Mrs. Gokhalay visits the villages in the neighbourhood almost daily as there is always a female patient requiring medical aid.

When the people have gathered their harvest we intend to call them in the evenings and address them on the subjects of hygiene and general culture.

Dr. Deva called here last Wednesday and stayed over a day as there are many patients whom we could not have attended. We cannot get his prescriptions dispensed in Dhaka Dispensary and we shall have to apply to higher authorities to make special case and have them dispensed, which would greatly help the poor folk in the neighbourhood but before that we intend to see Hospital Assistant in Dhaka.

Last Wednesday, we had a preliminary meeting of the prominent villagers of the neighbourhood and formed a strong committee of both Hindus

and Mahomedans to organize the work of primary education and village sanitation. As soon as the harvest is gathered we shall call the members of the committee to raise necessary funds for the work in hand.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
BABAN GOKHALAY

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

APPENDIX VI

LETTER FROM E. L. L. HAMMOND

CAMP PATNA,
December 13, 1917

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

You may remember discussing with me in Ranchi possibility of your raising a labour corps from Champaran for service in Mesopotamia. I understood that you were prepared to raise a corps of Army Bearers under your own command. I have however been told that you would be willing to raise a *labour corps*. Will you kindly let me know if this is the case, and if so whether you are still willing to do so, and what, if any, conditions you wish to attach. If you wish any force you raise to be a self-contained unit and not drafts to existing units, it will be necessary for me to address Army Headquarters. On the other hand if you do not want to go yourself and could assist us in obtaining men for the railway training depot at Gaya, where we need 500 a month, your assistance will be much appreciated. Kindly address your reply to me at Ranchi.

Yours sincerely,
E. L. L. HAMMOND

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

APPENDIX VII

LETTER FROM E. L. L. HAMMOND

RANCHI,
December 18, 1917

MY DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thanks for your letter of the 15th. I note our requirements which you will see are at present limited to drafts for existing units. There is no intention at present of raising a fresh Labour Corps.

We need men for Mesopotamia or for the Railway Training Depots at Gaya and Puri whence after 2 or 3 months' training they would be despatched to Basra. We give an advance of Rs. 30. The men get Rs. 15 p.m. while in

India and Rs. 20 when overseas. Rs. 3 capitation fee is paid for each man brought in.

Cannot you in the course of your tours point out the great economic opportunity now offered? If one man from a household goes he can remit Rs. 8 p.m. to his family and still have 100 or 200 according to the duration of war as undisbursed pay to start him in life on his return.

Labourers must be over 20 and under 35, really physically strong. If you can help us in recruiting such men you will not only be doing something towards the war but benefiting the people in whom you are taking personal interest. Three or four lakhs of rupees have been paid out in the Santal Parganas to the great discomfiture of the mahajan or oppressive landlord.

If you want to raise a corps of army bearers yourself and will let me know how many you could get I will send on your proposal to Army Headquarters.

Yours sincerely,
E. L. L. HAMMOND

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APPENDIX VIII

(a) *LETTER FROM L. F. MORSHEAD*

MOTIHARI,
January 14, 1918

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

In connection with the Champaran Agrarian Bill, I pointed out to the Government that the first clause of section 3, as at present drafted, prohibits *khuski* agreements, as hitherto understood, no less than *tinkathia*, because the form of *satta* approved by the Planters' Association contains a stipulation as to the area to be cultivated in order to supply the produce to be paid for by weight.

I have had a letter in reply to say that in the opinion of Government there is nothing in section 5 of the Bill to render invalid a *khuski satta* of the kind hitherto approved, but section 3 would render invalid the penalty for breach of such contract by liquidated damages. *Prima facie* there is no objection to an agreement to grow indigo on two bighas or, I suppose, any other portion of land provided that the *raiyat* has entire freedom to select the actual plots to be cultivated, and it was apparently the intention of the Agrarian Committee that the existing system of *khuski* should be allowed to continue subject to that proviso.

I have been accordingly requested to ascertain the views of the *raiyats* and their representatives both on this point and as to the most suitable way of modifying clause 3, so as not to interfere with *khuski sattas*.

We discussed the matter this morning, and I put before you Mr. Kennedy's amendment, which is as follows:

From the 1st October, 1917, any right, servitude or other interest notwithstanding, all lands within the district of Champaran shall be held by the tenant thereof free from any incident of tenure whereby such tenant is burdened with the obligation to grow any crop for the convenience of his landlord on his land or any part thereof and any previous act or acts permitting such as an incidence of tenure are hereby expressly repealed.

Any agreement, contract or hypothecation whereby a tenant agrees, contracts with or hypothecates to his landlord the crop grown on his holding or any part thereof shall be void as regards such condition save the holding or part of the holding be specially defined in such agreement, contract or hypothecation.

I understand that you take exception to the second portion of this amendment, which I mark B, but thought that the first portion alone, which I mark A, would be acceptable. Will you kindly let me know if I may inform Government accordingly? They are anxious to have a reply before the meeting of the Select Committee on the 19th. Could you oblige me with a reply before that date? I shall be in camp at Ramgarhwa on the 15th and 16th, and at Chainpatya on the 17th and 18th.

Yours sincerely,
L. F. MORSHEAD

(*b*) *L. F. MORSHEAD'S LETTER TO H. COUPLAND*

CAMP RAMGARHWA,
January 16, 1918

MY DEAR COUPLAND,

. . . Heycock and I saw Mr. Gandhi at Motihari on the 14th on the subject. I pointed out to Mr. Gandhi that the first clause of section 3 prohibits *khuski*, as hitherto understood and approved by the Committee in paragraph 8 of their report, no less than *tinkathia*. Under that system a *raiyat* agrees to grow indigo usually in consideration of an advance. He offers land which the concern approves before giving an advance, and is paid on the produce.

For purposes of discussion I took the Rajpore system, as I understand Mr. Sly and Mr. Gandhi had examined this system at Rajpore and were satisfied with it. Mr. Gandhi raised an objection that if the *raiyat* failed to grow the plots agreed upon, he would be liable to a suit for specific performances of the contract and liquidated damages; and so he would be, of course, if he took the advance and did not fulfil his part of the agreement and damage resulted.

Mr. Gandhi explained that the Bill was drafted in order to save *khuski* agreements which otherwise were held in accordance with the opinion of Sir S. P. Sinha to be barred under the Tenancy Act. I then suggested that they

might be left to the operation of the Tenancy Act, which at any rate would leave the *khuski* system in the position in which it stands now, whereas the Bill prohibits it contrary to the Committee's intention. In order to focus the discussion I showed him Mr. Kennedy's amendment, and asked if he approved of the first part of it, which confines the new legislation to the prohibition of *tinkathia* as a condition of tenancy. Upon reading it he declared himself ready to accept the first part of it as a solution. I told him that I did not wish to 'shoot him sitting' and he had better think it over. I then wrote the attached letter, and enclose a copy of his reply.

I do not myself believe that Mr. Gandhi represents the *raiyats*. So long as there is no compulsion they are competent to understand their own interests, and they both have been and are willing to grow indigo on the *khuski* system in Saran, where there is no *tinkathia* as well as in Champaran and Muzaffarpur a leading advantage of it being that if they require a fairly substantial advance to pay off a mahajan or the like they can get it. They will, however, lose this if they are not allowed to agree upon, at any rate, the description of land to be sown. It might be necessary to stipulate that the rent accounts must be kept entirely separate, but to go beyond this is likely, in my own opinion, to do more harm than good.

Yours sincerely,
L. F. MORSHEAD

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APPENDIX IX

W. S. IRWIN'S LETTER TO "THE STATESMAN"

January 8, 1918

TO
THE EDITOR
THE STATESMAN
[CALCUTTA]

SIR,

It being quite evident that people outside of Champaran, and least of all the Governments of Behar and Orissa and of India (*vide* the New Year's Honours' List) have no adequate conception of the grievous harm done in that district by Mr. Gandhi's "mission", and the ill-judged recommendations of the egregious Committee of Enquiry, I am once more tempted to draw attention to and emphasize both cause and effect.

To Government Mr. Gandhi gave an assurance that when he returned to Champaran all his efforts would be concentrated on the promotion (really

renewal) of amicable relations between landlords and tenants (of the disruption of which he and his supporters were the main if not the only cause). I hope and intend that this letter will enable you to decide whether or not he had loyally abided by his undertaking.

His instructions to tenants, since his return, have been to resist all the landlords' rent demands, unless granted a reduction of 20 per cent; 26 per cent *Sarabeshi* (as the case may be) or a refund of 25 per cent *Tawan*,—this in anticipation of the threatened special legislation, and notwithstanding that there is no law at present to that effect. Not only has this advice, which has been closely followed by the tenants, greatly embarrassed factories in their current working expenses, but has also, for the first time in the 32 years since the floating of the Bettiah Sterling Loan, caused the guarantors (or at least some of them) of the interest for that loan, to fail in the payment of the *kist* (instalment) which fell due on December 15th last, and thus has actually forced the Estate to borrow money again for that purpose. The guarantors can hardly be held responsible by the Courts of Wards for a failure directly caused by the mistaken action of Government, in sanctioning the wholly unnecessary (as was stated by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor himself) Committee.

I was asked by the District Officer to submit a rent collection statement for the 1st quarter of the current *Fasli* year (1325) for comparison with the same period of last year, in order no doubt to explain the default of the Motihari Ltd., share, amounting to Rs. 48,590-8, of the above interest, and I showed a deficit of Rs. 56,086-8-3, which more than accounted for the non-payment. Fisheries which since time immemorial have belonged to the Raj and to the lessees under the Raj have been and are now being stopped and looted by misguided tenants under, as they have stated in judicial and police inquiries, the instructions of Mr. Gandhi. The average in this concern for the past five years, or ever since *Sarabeshi* and *Tawan* were instituted, of rent suits and trifling criminal cases, was 21, and less than 3, respectively, per annum. This year, thanks to Mr. Gandhi and the Committee's recommendations, I anticipate not less than 2,200 of the former, and for the latter I cannot of course make any estimate. From the points of view of the lawyers and usurpers who imported Mr. Gandhi this doubtless is satisfactory, but alas! I sigh for the happy record of non-litigation now hopelessly broken.

At a lecture delivered by Mr. Gandhi in what is known as the "Gaurakshini Sabha" or refuge for aged cows, in Motihari, that gentleman, I am informed and believe, exhorted his Hindu and Mohamedan listeners to cease fighting with each other about the killing of one cow per annum, and make a united attack on the *Saheblog* (the landlords) who slaughter and eat cows daily. During the absences of her lord and master at Home Rule and such-like functions Mrs. Gandhi, following in the footsteps of Mrs. Annie Besant, scatters similar advice broadcast, and has recently, under the shallow pretence

of opening a school, started a bazaar in the *dehat* of one of the smaller concerns, in which grain and other articles can be purchased without the payment to the *malik* (proprietor) or lessee of the customary bazaar dues, octroi, etc. This is obviously and palpably done to shut down and ruin two neighbouring bazaars belonging to the factory. Can all the above be possibly construed into an honest fulfilment of Mr. Gandhi's undertaking to Government?

Court *chaprassis* have told me that they dare not mention the disloyalty and defiance of all authority which are openly talked of in villages into which they have to go in the performance of their duties. At least one court peon, whom I know, went into two of my villages to serve summonses, and was there insulted and hustled and turned out, and was told that no authority, civil or criminal, was now recognized other than that of "Gandhi Saheb". And so on and so on. Instances might be indefinitely multiplied, but will these serve any purpose when the Government wilfully shuts its eyes to the contempt of all legally constituted authority, and to the defiance of all civil and criminal law, and blindly persists in trying to pass a special Bill affecting only 5 factories in all Behar and Orissa? And even these so unfairly and inequitably that those whose tenants are discontented and out of hand, are compulsorily benefited, while those whose tenants have not complained nor have had any cause of complaint, are to be most unjustly penalized. There is no knowing to what extremes this sort of special legislation may not be carried and all zemindars and landholders should take warning that their liberties may at any moment be similarly sacrificed for the pacification of any political agitation, and the Permanent Settlement be as ruthlessly brushed aside as the Bengal Tenancy Act, if thought to be standing in the way of any preacher of thinly-veiled sedition. I would be perfectly willing to guarantee that if Mr. Gandhi and his satellites were compelled to evacuate the district, in less than two months order and quiet would be re-established, for already the *raiyats* are jeering at the lavishness of his promises to them and the tenuity of their materialization.

Yours, etc.,
WM. S. IRWIN

The Statesman, 11-1-1918

APPENDIX X

MEMORANDUM OF BIHAR PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION[1]

January 5, 1918

In the opinion of these members, the Champaran Agrarian Bill is both unnecessary and undesirable for the following reasons:

(a) Because it is based on the recommendations of a Committee of Enquiry which was admittedly appointed to allay an artificial agitation, organized outside Champaran and not in any way the consequence of any widespread grievances. The Committee has been shown to have made no genuine enquiry into agrarian conditions in Champaran as a whole, but merely to have made a superficial examination of the management of a small number of Indigo and Ticcadari Estates holding leases from the Court of Wards, and that at a time when the minds of the *raiyats* were inflamed by an agitation, encouraged by the Government, from which they have been led to expect some sort of Agricultural Millenium. Further, this Committee has been shown to have been actuated solely by a desire to produce a report which one of its members, the leader of the agitation mentioned above, could be induced to sign and not by any wish to report on the full and true facts of the case.

The present Bihar and Orissa Government and its predecessors have been fully aware of every detail mentioned in the Committee's Report, which has neither brought forward any new facts, nor shed any new light on the general position, and have not considered that any special legislation was necessary.

As a result of the unsatisfactory and partial enquiries made by this Committee the information it acquired was not sufficient to show the general position in the district in its true light, and this fact, combined with its biassed attitude and anxiety to pacify a mischievous agitator at any cost, even, if necessary, by a misuse of Trust Funds under control of the Government, render the Report and the recommendations contained in it so grossly one-sided and unfair, that no weight whatever should be given to them, and this legislation which is frankly based on them, should be entirely dropped.

(b) Because it singles out one district for invidious and unnecessary legislation.

(c) Because it proposes to invalidate existing contracts and incidents of the *raiyats'* tenancy, both of which have been proved to be perfectly legal, and the former of which received the direct sanction of the Government of Bengal only seven years ago.

[1] This was forwarded by the Board of Revenue to the Secretary, Revenue Department, Government of Bihar and Orissa.

(d) Because it proposes to abolish without compensation and for no adequate reason a system which has been in existence for over a hundred years and which is still carried on without friction in other districts.

(e) Because it proposes, without the consent of the landlord, to forcibly reduce rents which have been declared after an exhaustive enquiry by the Settlement Officials to be perfectly legal, fair and not excessive, and which have been paid willingly for a number of years.

In case the Government persists in pressing this Bill in spite of all the cogent reasons in favour of its abandonment, we will point out some of the chief defects and make certain suggestions which may go some way towards remedying them.

Section 3 (1), — This section, as it stands, will render the growing of Indigo and Sugarcane under what is usually known as the *khuski* system, impossible.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that it is not considered desirable to allow the *raiyat* to make a contract with his landlord binding himself to sell the produce of a particular crop grown on a fixed proportion of his holding for a long term of years at a flat rate based on the area of the land on which this crop is grown, it is still both desirable and necessary that he should be allowed to agree to sell the produce from a specified plot, selected by himself, at a rate based on the amount of the produce obtained. And this principle is admitted in the statement of objects and reasons attached to the Bill. If as is suggested, he is only to be allowed to bind himself to deliver a certain weight of produce, he is at the mercy of climatic conditions and renders himself liable to damages if he fails to deliver the specified amount, whereas if he contracts to deliver the produce of a certain plot, he is only liable for the amount of the balance of his advance if the crop on that plot does not come up to his expectations.

Further, the *raiyat* almost invariably demands a large advance before he begins to prepare his land, and being an exceedingly thriftless person, if no agreement is permitted binding him to grow the particular crop on a specified plot, he is very likely to take the advance and then fail to sow sufficient suitable land to produce the required amount, and for this reason it will be impossible for the landlord to risk the advance and the price of the seed. Also the *raiyat* instead of getting money from his landlord without interest will be forced to obtain it from the money-lender at an extortionate rate.

It is also obviously grossly unfair that existing contracts should be annulled without warning and without compensation and that a system of cultivation which has been carried on for over a hundred years should be abolished without giving planters time to arrange for an alternative system to take its place.

Champaran *raiyats* are both stupid and conservative at the best of times, and look on any innovation with suspicion, and the present disturbed state

of the district and the agitation still being carried on by Mr. Gandhi's followers will render the institution of the *khuski* system doubly difficult. We, therefore, wish to urge most strongly that contracts now in force should be allowed to continue for three years more or such time as outstanding advances on the original *sattas* remain unpaid on the understanding that planters will endeavour to replace the *tinkathia* system by the *khuski* system during that period.

It is often very difficult to collect these sums and *raiyats* can cause an infinite amount of trouble and expense if they refuse to pay, as they know that the individual amounts are very often so small as not to be worth suing for, though collectively they may amount to a very large sum.

It is, therefore, recommended that the above condition in favour of the planter shall be allowed to continue until the balance of the advantage received by the *raiyat* shall have been completely restored. This could cause no hardship, as the *raiyat* can at any time refund it either through the post or the civil courts. . . .

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APPENDIX XI

NOTE ON INTERVIEW BY W. MAUDE

January 31, 1918

1. We first discussed the *khuski* system. Mr. Gandhi objected to the hypothecation of any particular plot but said he did not object to the *raiyat* contracting to grow a certain amount of land in indigo. I then suggested substituting in the Champaran Planters' proposed amendment the words "produce of a certain proportion of his holding" instead of the words "produce of any specified field or plot selected by himself". Mr. Gandhi then suggested draft provisions to clauses 3, 4 and 5 (*vide* footnote[1]).

2. We next discussed the proposed amendment making the *satta* obligation continue until advance is paid off. Mr.Gandhi objected altogether to this, though it was explained that it might save much litigation.

3. We then discussed Sirnie. Mr. Gandhi's view was that neither Jallaha nor Sirnie deserved any consideration whatever although Sirnie may have taken a less rate of *sharabeshi* than Turkaulia.

4. We then discussed the proposal to make the *sharabeshi* enhancement as reduced binding. Mr. Gandhi agreed on this point but quoted from his letter of 24th January 1918 in which he said that "any amendment will have

[1] This footnote reads: "3(1) Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall prevent a *raiyat* from entering into a contract to grow a particular crop on any portion of his holding in terms of section 5 thereof.

To section 5 — Provided that nothing in the contract shall take away or limit the *raiyats'* freedom to select the land."

to carefully guard the right of appeal on grounds of irregularity or want of jurisdiction", as for instance the Settlement Officer may have wrongly recorded the incident or where there is a manifest clerical error.

5. As to *abwab* Mr. Gandhi has no objection to the proposal to make it applicable to the whole Province.

As to Mr. Gandhi's own amendment to make the landlord liable in all cases it can be put before the Select Committee but Government cannot undertake to withdraw the whole section if it is not accepted. Mr. Gandhi also objects strongly to the retention of sub-clause (3) of the clause.

6. As to cart *sattas* Mr. Gandhi insists that there should be a provision ending these, otherwise there will be [a] crop of law suits on the cart *sattas*.

7. The question of refund of *tawan* was mentioned but not discussed at this interview.

W. MAUDE

Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran

APPENDIX XII

SHANKARLAL BANKER'S LEAFLET

This is the first leaflet I write for you. I wish, therefore, to state at the very outset that my right to advise you is only nominal. I have not done any manual labour. I have not suffered the miseries that workers have to endure, nor can I do anything myself to remove that misery. Therefore, I feel hesitant in giving advice on this occasion. But, even though I have done nothing for you in the past it is my keen desire to do what I can hereafter according to my capacity. I write this with that desire.

Two days ago our situation had taken a serious turn. Some of you were in straitened circumstances, but instead of taking to labour to get relief from those circumstances as urged so often by Gandhiji, it was apprehended that some of you would break the vow and get back to the mills. But that situation has now passed away. Our dull hearts have been quickened by Gandhiji's fast. We have become conscious of the seriousness of our oath. We are convinced that 'we shall not break the oath even at the cost of our lives' is not a slogan merely to be repeated in meetings but has to be demonstrated in action. As a proof of this change in the situation, those who are in financial difficulty have willingly begun to do manual work. Not only so, but also those who are better off have set an example by assisting from their wages those in need, and have removed the possibility of a split among us for all time. But that is not enough. A very heavy responsibility has come over us by Gandhiji's fast; and if we understand that responsibility fully, we should exert ourselves to the utmost to end this struggle as soon as possible, we should adopt

all such means as would shorten the struggle consistently with keeping to our pledge. Our oath is to obtain a 35 per cent increase. And we know that financially it is not difficult for the employers to give the 35 per cent increase. But employers feel that if they gave the 35 per cent, the workers will become domineering and insolent, that they will become unruly at the slightest provocation, and ruin the industry by resorting to strikes on trifling matters. I see no reason for entertaining such a fear. Workers can never desire that an industry which gives them their daily bread should be destroyed. But if workers behave without discretion and without thinking about justice or injustice, such a result is inevitable. If we desire to be saved from it, we should determine to work regularly for the mill-owners in good faith. We should decide not to make unreasonable demands, and not to resort to remedies like strikes to secure justice until all other avenues are exhausted. But our task is not over with such a determination. We have to go to the employers, acquaint them with our decision and win their confidence. We have to remove the misapprehension which restrains them from giving us the 35 per cent increase. I strongly urge upon the workers to take immediate steps in this direction.

A Righteous Struggle

APPENDIX XIII

COMMISSIONER PRATT'S SPEECH

[AHMEDABAD,
April 12, 1918]

I would like you to listen to me attentively and repeat to everybody what I say, when you go back to your villages so that what I say to you now may come to be known throughout the district; for what I am going to say to you today is not only for you but for the whole district. You have been given much advice by Mahatma Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Saheb and other gentlemen who are working with them. They have made speeches from village to village but today I would request you to listen to me.

The rights of the agriculturists are such that they can keep the land in their possession for generations. But those rights carry with them the duty to pay regularly the land revenue assessment fixed according to law. It is only on that condition that you can continue to enjoy the possession of your land. It is the Government who determines the assessment through the instrumentality of its officers and without the intervention of any lawyer or barrister. No one but the Government has the right to fix the assessment. It is not a matter of which the civil courts can take cognizance. No one can go to a court with a complaint that the land revenue assessment is too high. The

agriculturists have no legal right to demand or to insist upon the postponement of the assessment. That is entirely within our gift. We issue orders after taking into account the condition of the crop and any complaints and objections that may be raised. After the final order is passed, there is no appeal. It is not a matter for Gandhiji or Vallabhbhai, and on that particular issue your fight will be in vain. That is what I wish to impress upon you and you must pay heed to these words, not merely because they are my words, but because they represent the legal position. It is not merely my order but that of Lord Willingdon. I have in my possession his letter which says that he will accept whatever order I will pass in this matter. You must, therefore, realize that it is not just I who am talking today but His Excellency the Governor.

Mr. Gandhi is a very good man, a very holy man and he gives you advice because he believes genuinely and honestly that it is in your interest. He thinks that by not paying up the land revenue assessment, you will be protecting the poor; that is what he was telling me when he saw me yesterday. But isn't the Government the protector of the poor? Is it the duty of your Governor or is it your duty to protect the poor? Do you not remember the days of the famine? In the famine of 1900, in the famine of 1902 caused by rats, I was the Collector of Ahmedabad and Panchmahal Districts. You will remember how many works had been opened by the Government for assisting the poor. I remember how many hundreds of thousands of rupees were spent for feeding the people, in building tanks and in giving *taqavi* loans. Those amongst you who are old will certainly remember those days. It is against such a Government that today your fight in this district is being waged. There is a big war going on in the world, and the circumstances are such that it is the duty of you all to give the Government every assistance. But instead of that what does the Government get from this District? Does it get assistance, or does it get opposition?

If you continue this fight against the Government it will be you who will have to bear the consequences and not these gentlemen of the Home Rule League. They will not suffer in any way. They are not the people who will go to jail. When a movement of this kind was started in Africa, Mahatma Gandhi went to jail. In this country he will not go to jail. Jail is not a fit place for him. I tell you again that he is a very good and a very holy man.

The Government does not harbour any anger against you. If children kick their parents, the parents are sad, but they do not get angry. Why must you suffer all this loss, forfeiture, *chauthai* fine, confiscation, the disruption of the Narva right? Why do you want to destroy your property by your own hands? Do you wish to lose your Narva right? Do you not care for your women and children? Would you like to be reduced to the status of labourers, and what for?

I have 28 years' experience of land revenue law. Mahatma Gandhi is my friend. He came to this country from Africa only two or three years ago; he has spent the greater part of his life in Africa. He is well-versed in religion. Whatever advice he gives on that subject is sound, but in political matters, in matters concerning land and land revenue assessment, he knows very little. I know far more about these matters, and I shall be sorry to see you suffer the consequences of your ill-advised actions. I shall be sorry to see the lands of good Patidars confiscated. Government knows that there has been a misunderstanding regarding the rights of agriculturists. Therefore, the benevolent Government is giving you this final opportunity of listening to its advice.

I have come here to give you this advice, and I have only this to say that it is the duty of the agriculturists to pay up their land revenue dues. Do not think that our Mamlatdars and *talatis* will collect money by seizing and selling your property. They will not take so much trouble. Our time is very valuable. They will not go to anybody's house to collect the money. I am not threatening you. You must realize that parents do not threaten but merely give advice. If you will not pay your assessment, your land will be confiscated. Many people tell you that that will not be so. But I tell you that that will be so. It is not necessary for me to take any pledge to that effect, but I have the authority to make good my words. Those who refuse to pay land revenue assessment will not get back their land. The Government does not wish to retain on their books such agriculturists, nor are we anxious to include the names of such in our records of rights. Once those names have been removed they will not be re-entered.

Now, let me tell you one more thing in conclusion. If anyone, through misunderstanding or mistake, takes a pledge, he need not consider himself bound by that pledge. Such a pledge need not be kept. If you break such a pledge no one can say to you that you have sinned or have committed a mistake. The world will regard such a person as innocent. You will recollect what happened in Ahmedabad. Many of you may not read newspapers; therefore I will tell you. There was a struggle recently in Ahmedabad between the mill-owners and the mill-hands. The latter had taken an oath that they would not go back to work until they got an increase of 35 per cent in their wages. But what happened in the end? When they realized that their pledge was not reasonable they could not adhere to it, they broke it and accepted an increase of 27½ per cent and resumed work. In the same way, I tell you that when you took this pledge, you made a mistake. You did it only because you forgot your duty towards the Government. You did not give full weight to the consequences of this pledge; consequences not only to yourself but to your children. Taking into account all this I ask you to think again and decide whether you should do your duty by the Government or adhere to your pledge and suffer the consequences?

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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CHRONOLOGY

(*October 1917 – July 1918*)

About *October 9* : Gandhiji laid foundation stone for *goshala* in Bettiah.

October 15 : Presided over Bihar Students' Conference at Bhagalpur.

October 18 : Government of Bihar and Orissa passed resolution on Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report which acknowledged "with much pleasure the good sense and moderation shown by Mr. Gandhi, who represented the cause of the tenants on the Committee".

October 19 : Gandhiji, spoke at reception by merchants at Broach.

October 20 : Presided over Second Gujarat Educational Conference.

October 21 : In concluding address at Conference expressed desire to lay down life in country's service.
Proposed vote of thanks at Humanitarian League.

October 26 : All-India deputation, including Gandhiji, Motilal Nehru, Tilak, Jinnah and Sapru, waited on Chelmsford and Montagu.

November 2 : Gandhiji presided over meeting at Godhra to protest against hardships of third-class railway passengers.

November 3 : Presided over First Gujarat Political Conference at Godhra.

November 4 : Announced at Political Conference intimation of Government's decision to remove customs levy at Viramgam.

November 5 : In concluding speech at Conference, exhorted participants to continue propaganda work and obtain signatures on petition to Montagu.
Presided over Dhed community meeting.

November 8 : Arrived at Motihari at night.

November 9 : Had interview in the morning with J. L. Merriman, District Magistrate.

November 11 : Addressed public meeting at Dharamshala in Muzaffarpur; appealed for support to Congress-League recommendations.

In the evening attended Conference of Hindu and Mahomedan leaders; left for Motihari, at 9 p.m.

November 12: Declared open Gokhale Library at Umreth.
J. M. Wilson, Secretary of Bihar Planters' Association, published in *The Statesman* opinion of planters' legal adviser.

November 14: Gandhiji opened school in Bharharwa near Doka, in Champaran; returned to Bettiah.

November 15: Had interview with J. T. Whitty, Manager of Bettiah Raj.

November 16: Visited Koeri; went to Amolwa Station, inquired into case of police excesses on labourers.

November 20: Opened school at Bhitiharwa, near Shrirampur, about two miles from Amolwa.

November 22: Informed J. L. Merriman of his impending absence from Champaran for over a fortnight and Babu Brijkishore Prasad representing him.

November 26: Had interview with Chelmsford and Montagu at Delhi.

November 27: Had interview with Tilak, Montagu.

November 28: Went to Aligarh; spoke on Hindu-Muslim unity at the Lyall Library Grounds; later, addressed Aligarh College students on "Truth and Thrift".
Called on Khwaja Abdul Majid. Left at night for Calcutta by train.

November 29: Champaran Bill, introduced in Council, referred to Select Committee.

December 4 & 5: Gandhiji held discussion with Ahmedabad mill-owners about workers' wages.

December 6: Spoke[1] on "Some Problems of Gujarat" at Dasa Khadayata Wadi in Nadiad.
Presided over Committee meetings of First Gujarat Political Conference and Gujarat Stree Kelavani Mandal.

December 10: Appointment of Rowlatt Committee announced.
Gandhiji in letter to Albert West preferred stopping *Indian Opinion* to its removal from Phœnix to the city—Durban.

December 16: Addressed large public meeting; visited Hindu Orphanage before leaving Nadiad.

[1] The text of this speech is not available.

December 19 : Communicated views on Champaran Agrarian Bill to Revenue Secretary, Bihar and Orissa Government.

December 26 : Attended 32nd Indian National Congress at Calcutta.

December 27 : Announced adjournment of All-India Social Service Conference in Calcutta.

December 29 : Moved resolution at Congress session concerning disabilities of Indians in South Africa.

December 30 : Proposed, at Indian Social Conference, resolution regarding education and uplift of depressed classes.
Spoke at First Bengal Agriculturists' Conference; also at All-India National Language Conference.

December 31 : Addressed session of All-India Muslim League in Calcutta; also meeting held under auspices of Bengal and Bombay Humanitarian League at University Institute.
Delivered presidential address at All-India Social Service Conference.

1918

January 1 : Presided over Ahmedabad meeting to protest against defective water supply.
Gujarat Sabha wrote to Bombay Government for exemption or relief from land revenue payments.

January 4 & 5 : Gandhiji held talks with representatives of Ahmedabad mill-owners and mill-workers.

January 5 : Champaran members of Bihar Planters' Association submitted memorandum against certain provisions of Champaran Agrarian Bill.

January 10 : Gujarat Sabha under Gandhiji's advice asked Kheda farmers to refrain from paying land revenue.

January 12 : Gandhiji returned to Motihari from Ahmedabad.

Before *January 13 :* Offered jobs to teachers who, having relinquished their work, sought alternative employment.

January 14 : Discussed Champaran Agrarian Bill with L. F. Morshead, Commissioner of Tirhut Division.
Kheda Collector in statement criticized Gujarat Sabha's advice to peasants to withhold land revenue, threatened action against defaulters.

January 16 : Government of Bombay issued statement that Collector of Kheda had granted revenue relief in fit cases.

January 21 : Gandhiji wrote to Tagore for his views on adopting Hindi as the *lingua franca*.

January 24 : Represented to Revenue Secretary of Bihar and Orissa that material alterations in Champaran Agrarian Bill be made only in consultation with *raiyats*' representative.

February 4 : Arrived at Bombay; addressed public meeting on Kheda situation.

February 5 : Along with Dinshaw Wacha and G. K. Parikh called on Governor Bombay in connection with Kheda situation; later left for Sabarmati.

February 6 : Reached Ashram, took note of notices issued by Collectors and Mamlatdars.

February 7 : Wrote to Pratt, Commissioner, Northern Division, protesting against harsh language of Government notices.

February 8 : Advised Ahmedabad mill-hands to be reasonable in their demands and seek settlement without creating bitterness.

February 12 : Discussed Kheda situation with Collector and Commissioner.

February 14 : Along with Shankarlal Banker and Vallabhbhai Patel, represented workers on Arbitration Board to decide wage increase in lieu of Plague Bonus.

February 15 : Arrived at Sabarmati Ashram; wrote to Pratt to postpone land revenue recovery till his inquiry into Kheda situation was over.

Before *February 19* : Contributed foreword to a translation of Gokhale's speeches.

February 19 : Explained to mill-hands his responsibility in regard to their trouble.

The Servant of India commenced publication on third death anniversary of Gokhale.

February 20 : Gandhiji presided over annual gathering of Bhagini Samaj in Bombay, spoke on women's education; returned to Nadiad.

February 21 : Motored to Kheda; interviewed Collector.

February 22 : Ahmedabad mill-owners declared general lock-out.

February 25 : Gandhiji returned to Ahmedabad from Nadiad.

February 26 : Commenced issuing leaflets on mill-hands' struggle, also practice of addressing mill-workers daily under *babul* tree on Sabarmati banks.

February 27 : Addressed prayer meeting at Sabarmati Ashram; interviewed Pratt.

March 1 : Workers' advisers pledged to feed and clothe strikers in need.

March 4 : Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council passed Champaran Agrarian Bill.

March 7 : Gandhiji discussed lock-out situation with co-workers.

March 10 : Presided over annual meeting of Gujarat Sabha at Ahmedabad.

March 11 : Interviewed Collector of Nadiad.

March 12 : Lock-out at mills lifted, strike by mill-workers started.

March 13 : Presided over two meetings addressed by Annie Besant.

March 14 : Mill-workers' reproachful remarks about their plight brought to Gandhiji's knowledge.

March 15 : Declared at workers' meeting decision to fast, to prevent strikers weakening.

March 16 : Returned to Sabarmati Ashram from Anasuyabehn's house.

March 17 : Appealed to Bombay Governor for postponement of land revenue recovery.
Explained significance of fast at Ashram prayer meeting.

March 18 : Announced settlement between mill-owners and workers; A. B. Dhruva appointed arbitrator.

March 19 : In leaflet No. 17, last of the series, Gandhiji gave implications of settlement; joined mill-workers' procession.

March 21 : Spoke at public meeting addressed by C. F. Andrews, who left for Bombay to intercede with Governor on behalf of Kheda peasants.

Before *March 22* : Following Governor's rejection of plea for postponement of land revenue recovery, Gandhiji sent ultimatum to Pratt.

March 22 : Inaugurating Kheda Satyagraha, addressed 5,000 peasants in Nadiad.
Satyagrahis pledged not to pay land revenue and to face consequences.
Left for Delhi in response to Andrews' telegram.

March 25 : Met Private Secretary to Viceroy regarding release of Ali brothers.

March 27 : Returned to Nadiad; wrote to Press on his recent fast. Issued circular on Kheda situation.

March 28 : Issued statement to Press on Kheda situation; left for Indore.

March 29 : Delivered presidential address at Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore.

March 31 : In letter to Press appealed to youths in Madras Presidency to learn Hindi.

April 1 : Commenced Kheda tour; Reached Kathlal.
At public meeting in Kathana characterised Government's attitude as unjust.

April 2 : At Limbasi appealed to people not to be scared of Government's oppressive measures.

April 4 : Addressed meeting at Karamsad; Rajendra Prasad and Qureshi were among those present.

April 5 : At Vadathal met Collector; asked people to bear hardships courageously unmindful of consequences.

April 6 : Visited Uttarsanda with Kasturba, Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai. Addressed public meeting of 2,000 farmers.

April 7 : Over 3,000 agriculturists heard Gandhiji at Navagam.

April 8 : Visited Borsad, addressed gathering of 4,000 people. Left for Ahmedabad by train. At National Education Week inauguration at Gokhale Hall in Madras, Annie Besant read out Gandhiji's message.

April 10 : Gandhiji met District Magistrate, Ahmedabad; spoke at Aklacha on Kheda situation.

April 11 : Met Commissioner at Ahmedabad; spoke at Vadod.

Before *April 12 :* Issued circular inviting Ahmedabad people to attend Commissioner's meeting on April 12.

April 12 : Commissioner addressed meeting of about 2,000 agriculturists, convened with Gandhiji's assistance, at Ahmedabad. Gandhiji spoke in order to clear misunderstanding created by Commissioner's speech.
Addressed meeting at Nadiad; left for Bombay.

April 13 : In Bombay met Revenue Board Members regarding Kheda problem.

April 15 : Wrote from Nadiad letter to *The Bombay Chronicle* dispelling misconceptions created by Commissioner's speech.

April 16 : Spoke at Od on need to be united in fight against Government.

April 17 : Issued pamphlet elaborating points in his letter to *The Bombay Chronicle* on Commissioner's speech. Addressed Satyagrahis at Dantali and Chikhodra.

April 18 : Visited Ras, in Borsad taluka, addressed agriculturists' meeting.

April 20 : With Kasturba and others visited Kasar, Ajarpara and Samantha in Anand taluka and addressed meetings of peasants.

April 22 : Spoke to cultivators at Palaj in Borsad taluka and later at Sunav.

April 23 : *En route* to Bombay, wrote to Kasturba: ". . . to be a mother to Maganlal. . . . It is Maganlal, if anyone, who has so trained himself that he can carry on my work after me." In Bombay addressed meeting of citizens on Kheda Satyagraha. Tilak moved resolution demanding either immediate suspension of land revenue recovery or impartial inquiry into peasants' grievances.

April 24 : Gandhiji left Bombay for Delhi.
Bombay Government issued Press statement on Kheda trouble.

April 25 : Orders issued to Mamlatdars in Northern Division not to recover land revenue from those unable to pay.
Viceroy opened War Conference in Delhi.

April 26 : Gandhiji wrote to Sir Claude Hill declining invitation to participate in War Conference or any of its committees. Had interview with Viceroy.

April 27 : Agreed to participate in War Conference after interview with Viceroy.
Tilak declined invitation to join War Conference.

April 28 : Met Sir William Vincent.

April 29 : Spoke at War Conference supporting resolution on recruitment.

April 30 : Wrote to Maffey, Private Secretary to Viceroy, offering his services as per his declaration at War Conference.

May 1 : Left Delhi for Nadiad.

May 3 : In Bombay attended All-India Congress Committee session; met Annie Besant.

May 5 : Attended Bombay Provincial Conference and Antyaj Conference at Bijapur.

May 6 : Issued statement in reply to Bombay Government's Press note on Kheda crisis.
Spoke at Bombay Provincial Conference supporting abolition of indenture system; left for Bombay.

May 13 : Spoke at Dhundakuva on "Soul-force *v.* Coercion".

May 14 : Was indisposed at Kathlal.

May 16 : Spoke at Sandesar.

May 17 : Left Ahmedabad for Champaran.

May 18 : Informed Maffey that he was actively preparing for recruitment campaign.

May 20 : Arrived at Motihari.

May 24 : Left Motihari for Ahmedabad *via* Bankipore after laying foundation stone of Ashram.

May 25 : Addressed large public meeting at Patna on India's lingua franca and self-government.

May 27 : Spoke at Khandhali on significance of satyagraha.

June 2 : Wrote to *The Bombay Chronicle* and Sir George Barnes on anti-Indian legislation in South Africa.

June 3 : Addressed villagers at Uttarsanda and Navagam.

June 6 : Issued manifesto to people of Kheda signifying end of Kheda satyagraha.

June 8 : Gave evidence in District Magistrate's Court, Nadiad, accepting responsibility for advising accused to remove onions from wrongly forfeited fields; addressed large gathering outside Court exhorting people to adhere to satyagraha.

June 9 : Reached Bombay; wrote to Chief Secretary, Bombay Government, declining to speak at Provincial War Conference.

June 10 : Attended Provincial War Conference at Town Hall.

June 11 : Participated in Servants of India Society celebration in Poona.

June 15 : Had interview with Governor of Bombay.

June 16 : Presided over Bombay public meeting protesting against Lord Willingdon's provocative conduct at Provincial War Conference.

Bombay branches of the Home Rule League passed resolutions criticizing Government's attitude.

June 17 : Gandhiji conferred with close associates regarding recruitment in Nadiad.

June 21 : Addressed public meeting, inaugurating recruitment campaign.

June 22 : Issued first leaflet of appeal for enlistment.

June 24 : Spoke at Ahmedabad protesting against Governor's conduct at War Conference; appealed to people to enlist in army.

June 26 : At Ras spoke on need to join army.

June 27 : In Kheda, stressed significance and efficacy of satyagraha at reception to released satyagrahis.

June 28 : Speaking at Kathlal, at meeting to present address to Mohanlal Pandya, leader of the "Onion Satyagraha", on his release, compared satyagraha to *kalpavriksha*.

June 29 : Received address at meeting to celebrate successful termination of Kheda Satyagraha.

July 8 : Report on Montagu-Chelmsford Constitutional Reforms released.

July 9 : Gandhiji wrote to Jinnah that they should simultaneously work for enlisting in army and for amendment of Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme.

July 14 : Spoke at Karamsad on recruitment.

July 18 : In response to Sastri's request, set down his views on Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme.
Speaking at meeting presided over by Pratt in Nadiad, declared his reluctance to go outside Gujarat for recruitment work, so long as his own people hung back.

July 22 : Issued second leaflet of appeal for enlistment.
Wrote to Govind Malaviya that Montagu-Chelmsford Scheme was good, that its shortcomings could be removed through agitation.

July 27 : *The Bombay Chronicle* published obituary of Sorabji Shapurji Adajania by Gandhiji.

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CORRIGENDA

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128, item 61, dateline	[*1917*]	[January 27, 1919]	The item should be placed next to item 90 in Volume XV.
131, item 62, dateline	[BHAGALPUR, *1917*]	*Bhagalpur*, October 15, 1917]	This item should be placed next to item 3.

